

TAJDAR JUNAID ★ AISI TAISI DEMOCRACY ★ CHAOS

Rolling Stone

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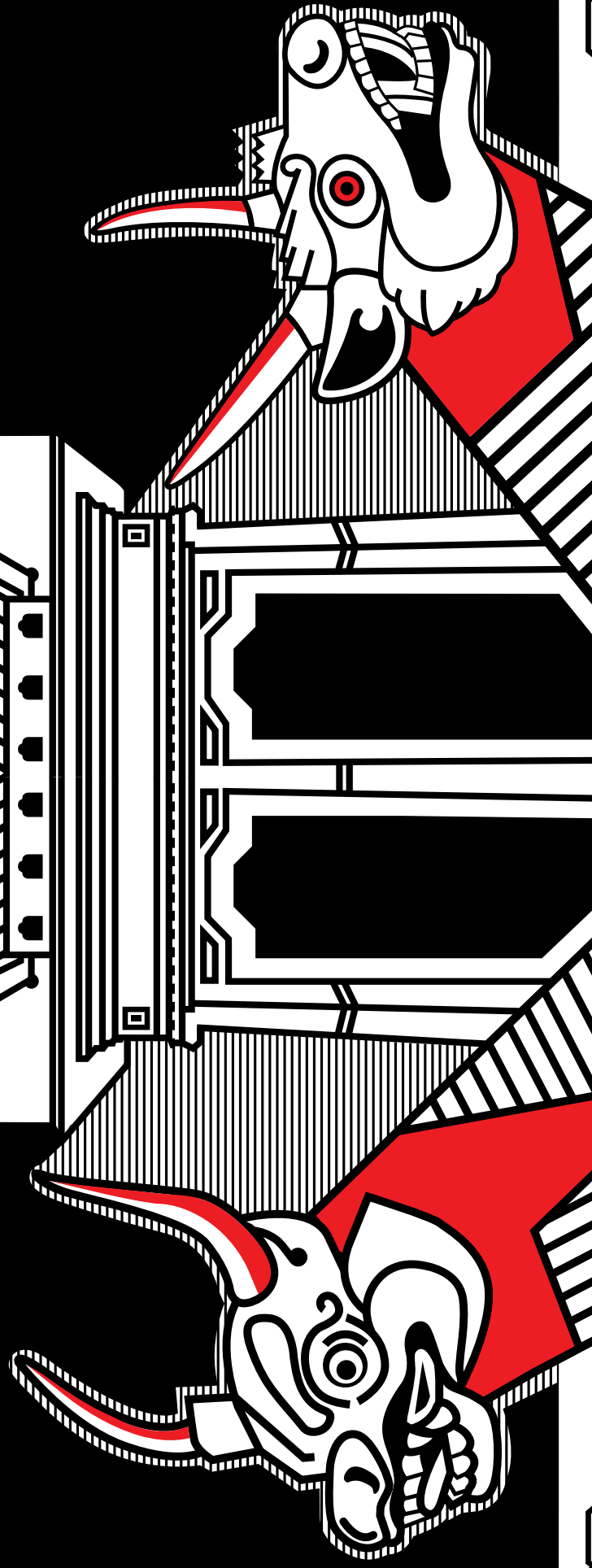
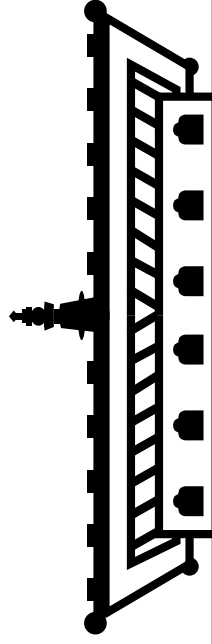
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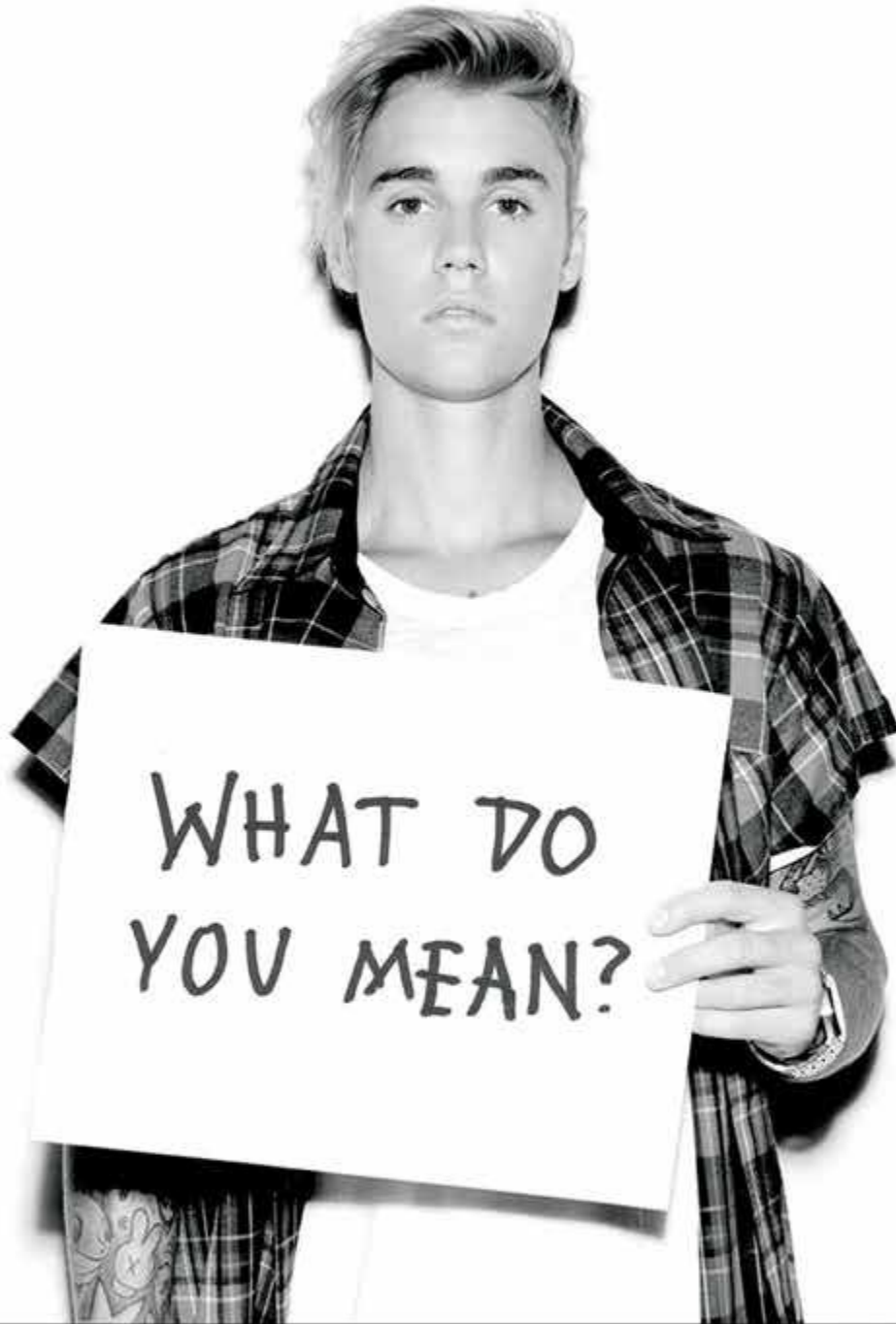


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"ALL THE NEWS THAT FITS"



The Crisis In Indian Rock

Rahul Ram of Delhi band Indian Ocean, are among the bands formed in the Nineties, who continue to play headlining sets at festivals across the country

Why is there such a poverty of talent in the Indian rock scene? The last two years have failed to produce promising talent who could turn into headlining artists and there are no new headlining artists on the horizon either

By Lalitha Suhasini..... 40

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Singer cuts new album with his pre-Heartbreakers crew

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Tom Petty

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BURNING BRIGHT
Kolkata rockers Neel
And The Lightbulbs



ONLINE EXCLUSIVES

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We bring you all the music and live action from one of the most awaited fests of the year. The lineup for the 2015 edition includes funk rock act Neel and the Lightbulbs, electronica artist Nicholson, and Tripura rapper BK (Borkung Hrangkhawl).

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Love Letters & Advice



KimK's American Dream

I always used to wonder what the big fuss about the entire Kardashian family/franchise was for. But clearly there's a lot more to the family and especially Kim Kardashian that just the reality show. I know that the decision to put her on the US cover was followed by a lot of criticism, but it can't be denied that the Kardashians are an inescapable part of American pop culture.

-Preeti Singh, Gurgaon

Gutslit Rules

Gutslit is one of my favorite

bands on the Indian metal circuit! I have been following them since their Mood-I years, and they have come such a long way. *Skewered In The Sewer* was such a crazy album; I think it really proved what the band was capable of. With reference to Gutslit's Europe tour, it's great to see Indian metal — especially a less mainstream genre like grind — being represented on an international level.

-Siddhi Shah, Mumbai

Sridhar's Stunning Performance

I caught Suman Sridhar and The Oracle on their Bengaluru leg of the Black Mamba tour and was simply blown away by her powerful vocal delivery. While I have previously watched Sridhar live as a part of her duo Sridhar/Thayil and heard her background scores for advertisements, she never ceases to amaze. By far, one of the most diverse vocalists I have ever heard.

-Paul Fernandes, Bengaluru

On Their Playlist

I absolutely loved the concept of "The Playlist Issue." I was fascinated to learn what some of the biggest musical acts today consider as their musical influences, and I gained a lot of insight into the artists as well. It just goes to show how some musical legacies remain timeless even decades later.

-Harsh Gupta, Mumbai



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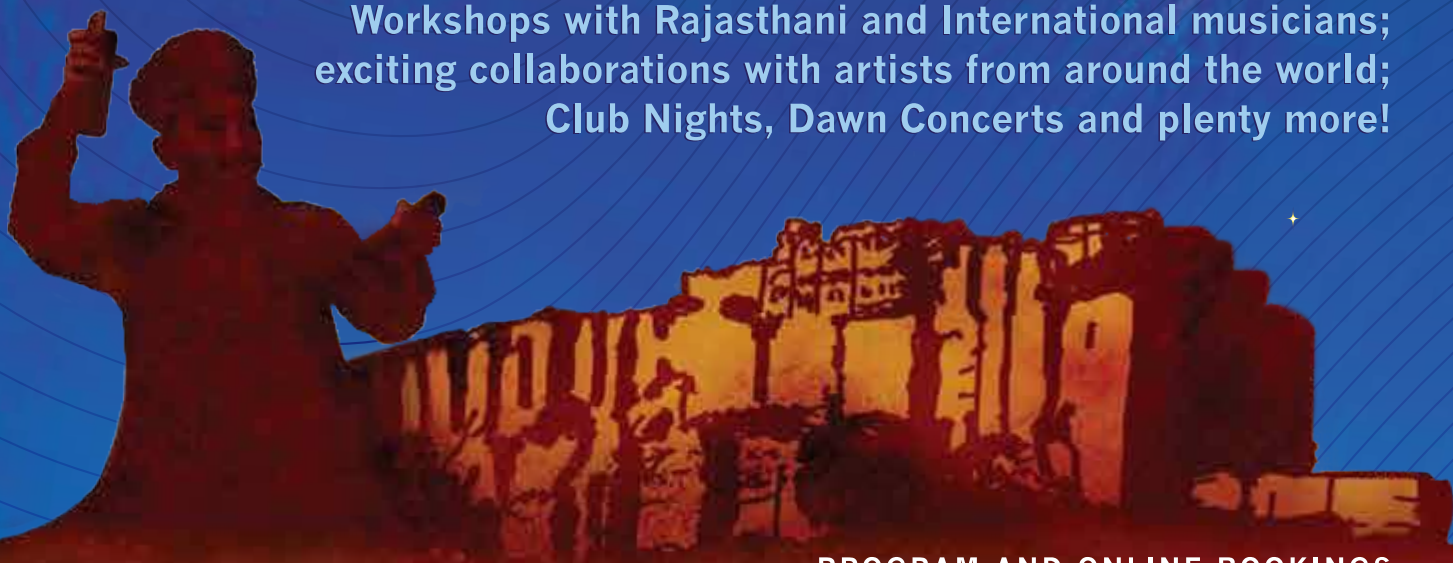
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Rock & Roll

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Radio, Radio

Clockwise from top left: Beats 1 DJs Annie Clark (St. Vincent); Elton John; Pharrell Williams and Scott Vener.

Inside Apple's Music Moves

The company may be winning the streaming wars — will it take over the music industry?

By Steve Appleford

AS OF EARLY AUGUST, APPLE Music, the company's long-awaited on-demand streaming service, seemed to be a success: Overcoming technical glitches and complaints about a complex interface, Apple announced 11 million trial-subscription sign-ups in five weeks — more than half of chief competitor Spotify's paid internation-

al user base. But the music industry was at least as happy about another aspect of Apple's musical efforts: the company's free Beats 1 online radio station focusing on new music, which broadcasts live 24/7. "It's exciting," says Glassnote Records president Daniel Glass. "Everyone's watching them on music discovery."

When Drake wanted a high-profile debut in late July for "Charged Up" — a salvo in his beef with rapper Meek Mill — he chose his own Beats 1 show, a venue that hadn't even existed the month before. Beats 1 is meant to promote Apple Music's on-demand streaming, which debuted alongside it on June 30th, but the

station is becoming a force in its own right, starting to break songs ("New Americana," from rising alt-pop star Halsey) and raising excitement with a new approach to a very old medium — though Apple hasn't released listenership numbers, and terrestrial and satellite radio aren't going anywhere. "It's really simple," says Beats co-founder Jimmy Iovine, who sold the company to Apple last year. "All the people of the world listening to the same song at the same time."

"It's a nice hybrid of the past and the present," says Vampire Weekend's Ezra Koenig, who has his own show, as do Beats co-founder Dr. Dre, Elton John, Pharrell

CENTRE STAGE

Nine Inch Nail's vocalist Trent Reznor at a performance in Prague in 2014

APPLE EVEN HELPED MAKE MUSIC VIDEOS FOR DRAKE, PHARRELL AND EMINEM.



Williams, Queens of the Stone Age's Josh Homme and St. Vincent's Annie Clark.

Beats was working hard on playlists tagged to users' musical tastes — an approach that continues on Apple Music, which offers targeted suggestions under its “For You” header — when Nine Inch Nails frontman Trent Reznor, who was Beats' chief creative officer, decided it needed something more universal as well. “I realized it would be cool to hear someone talking,” says Reznor, “to turn on the radio and feel a part of something.”

Beats 1 is meant to help build what Iovine calls “an ecosystem” around Apple Music. “The [other streaming services] feel like they were designed by engineers,” says Reznor. Adds Iovine, “Why use the word ‘service’ if you're not a service? If you're just a utility, what's the point?”

The station's vibe was designed by U.K. DJ Zane Lowe, who garnered a reputation as a tastemaker during a 12-year career at BBC1. The combination of hip-hop, indie rock, pop and EDM that Lowe has brought — along with heavy doses of U.K. grime artists — lend the station an unapologetic hipness. “It's not concerned about what's charting,” says Reznor. “And we don't do research. Just go with what we think is cool.”

The third segment of Apple Music's “ecosystem” is the Connect network, which gives artists home pages where they can release content directly to fans. Apple is already scoring major exclusives, with artists from Dre to Keith Richards using Connect to debut new music — striking at a chief selling point of Jay Z-owned compet-

A GUIDE TO THE STREAMING WAR

The streaming future of music is taking shape — but which service should you choose? Here's a guide to the three biggest contenders



Apple Music

Biggest strengths: Beats 1 radio is unique. Service integrates with iTunes. Deep, smartly curated playlists.

Biggest weakness: Interface can be confusing for casual users.

Free option: Non-subscribers can use radio — including Beats 1 — and Connect, but can't access the on-demand library.

Exclusive content: Growing — from Dr. Dre's *Compton* to Taylor Swift's entire catalog.



Spotify

Biggest strengths: Easy to use. Elegant, well-developed mobile app. Lightning-fast streaming.

Biggest weakness: Discovery features are weaker than Apple's. A few major artists (Taylor Swift, Thom Yorke) aren't available.

Free option: PC users can listen to any track (with ads); app users only get Pandora-like radio.

Exclusive content: Limited, but Prince debuted a new song on the service.



Tidal

Biggest strengths: The only major service with a full-CD-quality tier (for \$19.99 a month; Spotify-level quality is \$9.99). Frequent big-name exclusives.

Biggest weakness: High-quality sound is pricey. Glitchy search. Reported business struggles could impact users.

Free option: 30-day trial

Exclusive content: Extensive, from Lil Wayne to Rihanna, though in some cases limited to videos.

itor Tidal. Apple even helped make music videos for Drake, Pharrell and Eminem. Drake, meanwhile, has reportedly struck an exclusive deal to release new music with Apple for as much as \$20 million. “They're extending themselves aggressively,” says Glass, “to A&R people, to managers, to record companies. They want to collaborate creatively.”

Apple is already the world's largest music retailer. With its aggressive plays to dominate streaming, not to mention artist

development and promotion, the world's most valuable company seems poised for even more decisive domination of the industry. But no one is ringing alarm bells just yet. “I don't think they have too much power,” says Miguel manager Troy Carter. And the players inside Apple see a chance to remake a struggling industry. “With the scale, power and resources that Apple has,” says Reznor, “I can think of no company better to be a part of to try and pull this off.”

ADDITIONAL REPORTING BY STEVE KNOPPER

FUNNY NOTES

Aisi Taisi Democracy during a performance



Parliament Funkadelic

The year-old political satire act Aisi Taisi Democracy featuring Indian Ocean vocalist Rahul Ram, is riffing off on Indian politics and pop hits

THE GODHRA RIOTS, BABRI MASJID demolition, Vyapam scam — Aisi Taisi Democracy has the nerve to hold a mirror up to all the warts and bumps in the Indian political system. While the likes of Cyrus Broacha, former MTV VJ and current host of *The Week That Wasn't* on IBNLive and stand-up comic Anuvab Pal from Mumbai regularly regale us with their own brand of intelligent political satire, there have been few bands [Indian Ocean, Rabbi Shergill, Imphal Talkies and The Ska Vengers] that have attempted to look to politics in their songwriting.

Formed a year ago, Aisi Taisi Democracy, comprising Indian Ocean founder member Rahul Ram, screenwriter, lyricist and stand up artist Varun Grover and Delhi-based stand up artist Sanjay Rajoura, is by no means a conventional band or stand-up act. All their material is in Hindi and it's not a puerile set filled with cuss words and sex jokes told in an arrogant, boorish manner that passes off for comedy nowadays. With Aisi Taisi Democracy, Ram plays an acoustic

guitar and in his own words, a fool. He says of his new band, "We're like the fool in Shakespeare. I think when we occupy the position of the fool, a certain amount of dissent will be tolerated."

Ram, who has been following Rajoura's shows in Delhi for the last six years, says that he was impressed with the stand-up comedian since the start. He says, "So I told him that if he ever needed to add music to his routine, I'd happily show up." Subsequently, Ram and his Indian Ocean bandmate Amit Kilam wrote some songs for the 2013 Hindi documentary film *Katiyabaaz*, centered on electricity theft in the city of Kanpur in Uttar Pradesh. Adds Ram, "I wanted to know who had written the lyrics for the songs, and I got in touch with Varun in May last year."

Grover and Rajoura, who were performing at stand-up shows together, decided to team up for a new project. Says Rajoura, whose work as a writer on the film *Masaan* has won rave reviews, says, "I'd asked Sanjay if we could include a musician, and if we could find an up-and-coming artist. I didn't believe him when he said Rahul Ram could be part of our group." Music, says Grover, helps to soften the blow. About 30 per cent of their material focuses on politics. Says Grover, "Politics has turned into a touchy subject now. People are divided in defending the right of politicians, and politicians seem to be united in the stance that they've taken. This is the time when people should be united.

Music makes it easy to talk about things like the 1984 (Delhi) riots and Godhra."

Aisi Taisi Democracy couldn't have found a better candidate to write musical parodies than Ram. The vocalist and bassist of Indian Ocean has championed the cause of tribals and farmers in the Narmada Bachao Andolan and adopted a folk song that turned into one of Indian Ocean's biggest hits: "Ma Rewa." Indian Ocean's last album *Tandanu* includes "Cheetu," another brilliant song from Ram's Narmada Movement days and "Gar Ho Sake," a collaboration with vocalist Shubha Mudgal, which Ram refers to as a "leftie anthem."

Reworked Hindi film songs and English pop hits are key to Aisi Taisi Democracy's performances. So "Mere Saamne Waali Khidki Mein" from the 1968 romantic comedy *Padosan* works perfectly to highlight cross-border relations between India and Pakistan as "Mere Saamne Waale Sarhad Pe" and Danish band Aqua's superhit "Barbie Doll" has been turned into "Babri Doll", referring to the Babri Masjid demolition in 1992, which subsequently led to rioting in Mumbai and across the country. Says Ram, "It's very difficult to get angry at someone who's laughing at you and at themselves. You just have to turn around and ask them, 'Can't you take a joke?' and they shut up."

Not all of the band's material is political, though. The three of them also have a go at the rising number of malls and high-rises in the country, which, according to them, is a misconstrued concept of growth. Says Grover, "All three of us feel strongly about the idea of development that we have in India." This is the part that's easy though. The audience members don't mind personal jibes and willingly confess to being mall rats.

But it is the political jokes that have been making the audiences squirm in their seats. Says Grover, "The audience at our shows feels uncomfortable at times. *Woh humari comedy ka ek zaroori aspect hai*. [It is an integral part of our comedy]." Adds Ram, "A friend of mine brought Modi supporters to our show and they walked out." Aisi Taisi Democracy heads out on tour this month to Bengaluru, Kolkata, New Delhi and Mumbai, and Ram is already planning a gag or two in honor of West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee. "Of course, there will be Didi jokes," he says. It doesn't take Grover too long to change his set around either — two days for 30 minutes worth of new material. What if the jokes don't go down well? The band won't kowtow to pressures, political or otherwise. Says Grover, "I won't change my material to please people."

The aim is to get to reach out to the common man. Says Grover, "Right now, our audience is the urban elite. We want to go to smaller towns next year where the kind of comedy they currently get to experience is pretty harmless — the Kapil Sharma variety."

LALITHA SUHASINI

Enjoy The Silence

Mumbai-based guitarist, vocalist and composer Tajdar Junaid on new material that is much more orchestral, cinematic and even more introspective

YOU MIGHT HAVE heard of him from his delicate, meditative 2013 album *What Colour Is Your Raindrop*, with songs such as “Dastaan” and “Though I Know,” or his composition for Amazon’s Kindle e-book reader called “Kindle The Fire.” For composer Tajdar Junaid, creating a jingle is an enriching as writing a song for his album or performing. The Kolkata-bred, now Mumbai-based musician says he’s in “a very satisfying space” when it comes to having an audience.

Rightly so — Junaid, along with fellow Kolkata musicians such as drummer Jivraj Singh and guitarist-vocalist Nishchay Parekh and percussionist Dwaipayan Saha, have been performing *What Colour Is Your Raindrop* and new material in Bengaluru and Kolkata to an impressive following. Says Junaid, “I’m surprised there’s a crowd for this. You need a lot of patience to listen to it.”

Junaid says he’s happy there are people who want “good, honest music.” The guitarist played two new songs — “Devotion” and “Reflection” — in Delhi. “Devotion” is a solo piece performed on the 10-string South American instrument charango. “Reflection,” however is a newer track that Junaid says is orchestral, with plans to record with New York-based Orchestra of St. Luke’s, who have previously scored films such as *Shutter Island*. The track also includes drums by Singh, and Junaid, who plays piano, adds that the track is sonically closer to “Dastaan.”

While *What Colour Is Your Raindrop* included everything from the charango to violins and sarangi, Junaid is expanding his inventory to include shehnai, sitar and another South American stringed acquisition called the ronroco, an Argentinian mandolin that’s an octave lower than the charango. Junaid says he’s can’t help adding more instruments to his sound,



PLAY TIME
Tajdar Junaid

“I’m just like a child — I’m looking for new things to play. I’m not thinking of what works or doesn’t work, but just what makes me happy.” He’s also going back to drummer Vishal Nayak, the drummer in his first rock band Cognac to have him record new material. Says Junaid, “He recorded drums for ‘Yadon Ki Pari’ in his kitchen in New York. But the sound he got in his kitchen is something I can’t get in any studio here.”

Between scoring for films and working on ads, Junaid is constantly reworking his live set, adding performers such as Singh and Parekh, who added electronic music elements to his songs at their Kolkata gig in July. Junaid adds, “I like to have my friends put their stamp on my music.”

Junaid is he’s also putting together a Mumbai lineup that includes Jehangir Jehangir on drums, bassist Nikhil Thomas and his Kolkata violinist Bhaskar Dutta. He’s also not done with *What Colour Is Your Raindrop*, with a video for “Yadon Ki Pari” set to release this month, followed by another animated video for “Ekta Golpo,” by Mumbai’s creative studio Pigeon & Co. Says Tajdar, “These are stories that I have, that I want to share and people want to listen to it, so it’s good to connect.”

ANURAG TAGAT

JAZZCORNER

BY SUNIL SAMPAT

Time and change



GEORGE BERNARD SHAW AWOKE US TO THE fact that “England and America are two countries divided by the same language” in *Pygmalion* through the voice of Professor Henry Higgins. Amusing, tongue-in-cheek and accurate, but there is another observation — all of mine, which is that in England, boys’ schools have all their kids looking exactly like each other and they are almost interchangeable in their similarity. But they all grow up, individual, different and border on eccentricity, but totally unlike each other.

On the other hand, American school and college kids can dress as they want, wear their hair as they want, are encouraged to be individual and have much greater degrees of freedom than their English counterparts. However, when they grow up they all become similar, like each other and, to a great degree, interchangeable!

What does this have to do with jazz....or any music? It would be an amusing exercise to see the effects of the great proliferation of music institutes who “teach” jazz. Jazz has traditionally been a music intensely accentuating the individuality of the musician to the extent that it is his or her voice that exceeds the other components in the music.

Thelonious Monk, or Charles Mingus, Fats Waller, Lester Young and several others have been charming eccentrics; all these musical geniuses and their music have been so unlike any other in jazz that, perhaps their eccentricity has found its way into the great music they have each created. All these musicians are from an earlier era of jazz.

Fast forward to contemporary jazz musicians. There is now a route, a method, a process which the modern musician comes from. Music schools. There are a number of jazz schools and training centres, including in India, which train musicians in the art of playing jazz. With technology producing near-perfect instruments and schools churning out well-trained jazz players, one would think the level of contemporary jazz would be altogether high. I am not at all sure this is the case for, while the sound of the music is technically perfect, it is almost clinically, almost mechanically so.

My feeling is that the individuality of the performer has been compromised, if not totally ironed out by the technical proficiency that needs to be achieved.

It was said of Thelonious Monk that he searched for sound between the keys in the piano. Charlie Parker played entire concerts on the red transparent plastic saxophone gifted to him; it was merely a promotional gimmick to give him this horn — no one expected it could be played. Yet, Parker made recordings with this “gimmick”. The sound is as good as when he played the conventional sax. Trumpet player Clark Terry has played just the mouthpiece from his trumpet and made it sound good.

The modern, schooled musician has been weaned away, even discouraged from being the “individual” that Monk, Parker, Terry and others of their generation naturally were.

However, change is inevitable in jazz as everywhere else. My reading is that in the last few decades in jazz, the music has gone from the highly individualistic until the late 1960s, when jazz musicians became keen to explore the possibilities of the electronic sound of the new instruments that emerged from the new technology to the contemporary picture perfect sounding jazz musician.

Watching the future of jazz is such an exciting prospect!

Sunil Sampat is a jazz critic and Contributing Editor of Rolling Stone India. Write to Sunil at jazzwala@gmail.com

Tom Petty Kick-Starts Mudcrutch Once More

Singer cuts new album with his pre-Heartbreakers crew and opens up his vault

IT'S BEEN SEVEN YEARS SINCE TOM Petty reassembled Mudcrutch, the short-lived band he formed in the early Seventies, years before finding fame with the Heartbreakers. Mudcrutch's self-titled 2008 debut ranks among Petty's best recent work. Now, he's readying a second Mudcrutch set. "I've spent the last month frantically working on material," Petty says,

music. I play bass, which is a lot of fun for me, since I started out as a bass player. And Tommy is just out of sight on guitar. We spent our teenage years singing together, so we have a good blend."

The first Mudcrutch album was recorded in only two weeks. The group plans a similar straight-ahead process when it reconvenes in a Los Angeles studio later this summer to hammer out new material. Mudcrutch played a handful of successful California club dates in 2008, but this time out Petty hopes they'll tour more extensively.



BIG MUDDY
Petty onstage
in 2014

noting he has four songs that he's happy with. "The good thing about Mudcrutch is that everyone brings in a song, so I don't have to write 12 or something. Following up the last one is intimidating because I think that's one of the better albums I was ever involved with."

Mudcrutch originally featured drummer Randall Marsh and rhythm guitarist Tom Leadon (brother of founding Eagles guitarist Bernie Leadon) alongside two future Heartbreakers, guitarist Mike Campbell and keyboard player Benmont Tench. The band first got together in 1970 in Petty's hometown of Gainesville, Florida, then moved to Los Angeles, where it broke up in 1975 after releasing just one single.

"It's a totally different thing than the Heartbreakers," says Petty. "It's a different rhythm section and a different style of

do more theater shows, but it's complicated business-wise. I don't know for sure, but I would bet it costs us money. But I loved the freedom of it."

Also in the works is an album built around material Petty recorded for 1994's *Wildflowers*, the Rick Rubin-produced solo disc that remains one of his most beloved LPs. "It's not really a box set," he says of the release. "We have the second album of the double album that was originally made. We're going to put it out as its own album. It's sitting there finished. I'm just waiting to hear when they're gonna put it out."

In the meantime, Petty has no intention of recording another solo album in the foreseeable future. "There's nobody I'm longing to play with besides the Heartbreakers," he says, "so I just don't see the point of a solo record."

ANDY GREENE



MOVIES

SEX, DRUGS AND A BREAK-OUT STAR

How 'Diary of a Teenage Girl' made Bel Powley into a Hollywood It girl

British actress Bel Powley has appeared onscreen and onstage for a decade. But the 23-year-old's role in the widely acclaimed film *The Diary of a Teenage Girl* involved a "scary" first — a series of sex scenes with co-star Alexander Skarsgård. "I'd never even had an onscreen kiss before," she says, "let alone an onscreen shag. I was like, 'This is the worst idea in the world!'" By the time the film was finished, she'd shot eight of them — "including the lesbian sex scene."

In *Diary*, Powley stars as Minnie, a 15-year-old in 1970s San Francisco who worships Iggy Pop, drops acid and just happens to be sleeping with her mom's boyfriend. The film premiered at Sundance in January, earning a jury award and making Powley the It girl of the festival circuit.

At 13, she starred in *M.I. High*, a popular U.K. kids show, but she didn't see herself pursuing an acting career. That changed at 16, when playwright Polly Stenham cast her in a play at London's Royal Court Theatre. "It opened my eyes to all these strong women in this industry," Powley says.

She was especially drawn to *Diary's* matter-of-fact take on teenage sexuality. "There's no moral story coming away from it," says Powley, who has four more features in the works, including *Ashes in the Snow*, a World War II drama based on Ruta Sepetys' best-selling novel. "There's no life lesson to it. I desperately wanted to be part of that."

ELISABETH GARBNER-PAUL

Voices From The North East

With Ziro and NH7 Weekender Shillong just around the corner, there's more reason for you to check out the acts that are on the lineup, and also those that aren't on it **By Nirmika Singh**



Purple Fusion

Purple Fusion

IT IS QUITE PROBABLE THAT WHEN YOU FIRST LISTEN to Nagaland band Purple Fusion, you might feel a little stung. Or a little confused too. The band uses rock, jazz-funk grooves on songs whose language takes a few seconds to register. But none of these songs fail to entertain. "Ho Hey", an up-tempo reggae track will have you singing along to it in its very first verse while "Longmi Khi" (Reminiscent Song), a groovy funk song, manages to hold its own even without a catchy melody. Last year, Purple Fusion released their debut album *Folk Reminiscence*, which features songs in Naga languages as well as Hindi and English. The band has been doing exceptionally well since they started gigging in 2012; in the same year, they teamed up with Grammy-winning American artist John Schlitt of the gospel band, Petra, and also composed the background music for *Songs of the Blue Hills*.

Borkung
Hrangkhwal



Borkung Hrangkhwal

THERE ISN'T A SOCIAL ISSUE in India that Tripura-based Borkung Hrangkhwal or BK as he is popularly known, hasn't rapped about. From racism and tribal rights ["My Roots"], to peace and equality ["Free", "Peace"], BK's music has covered them all. That is the reason why he chose a lighter theme for his next song "Hashtag I wanna be famous." BK says, "This is my first commercial song, in the sense that I am not talking about societal problems in it. It's about how your life changes when you become famous. Also these days, the hashtag culture has really caught on, so I wanted to highlight that as well." Rock songs like this one will also ensure that his 45-minute set at the Ziro Festival Of Music and the Shillong edition of NH7 Weekender stays varied, and not just heavily dominated by a mix of hip-hop and dub-step. "I want to give people something different this time," says BK, who also opened for American rockers Hoobastank at their concert in Shillong in 2013.

Blue Temptation

IF YOU'RE A FAN OF THE BLUES, IT WILL BE HARD FOR YOU TO NOT GET addicted to Shillong-based band Blue Temptation's newest single, "Ramblin' On." The song, which is part of a four-track collection ["No, we didn't package it as an EP," informs guitarist Gregory Ford Nongrum] has a great hook and characteristic blues breakdowns and comebacks, not to mention weeping guitar riffs and solos. The song and the video are the first of four live recordings titled *Live From La View* that the band has done. About why the band chose to record the compilation as a live project, Nongrum says, "We basically are a blues band. We wanted to keep the feel intact while playing; you need a raw energy, which can't be replicated in a studio." Blue Temptation are currently working with a session drummer, and plan to release a seven-song EP when the original drummer, who is in Malaysia right now, returns in December. Adds Nongrum, "We are also looking at touring a few places then."

Blue Temptation





Summersalt

Summersalt

THIS SHILLONG-BASED BAND CALLS ITSELF A “TRANSFUSION” act, as it mixes traditional Khasi music with rock, acoustic and jazz-funk styles. While Summersalt’s sound has been shape-shifting, the six-member band has always chosen unconventional lyrical themes for their songs. “Pyrkhat Ho Khun” [Think My Child] is about a conversation between a father and his unborn child whereas as “Kamai Iaka Hok” (Earn Righteousness) is about leading a responsible lifestyle that questions violence and injustice. Vocalist Pynsuk Syiemiong pulls off these numbers with finesse, alternating between staccato punches and child-like lilts. Summersalt is currently working on their debut album, which they plan to release soon.



Mangka Lauihui

Mangka Lauihui

IT WOULD BE MISLEADING TO CALL MANGKA LAIHUI SIMPLY A MUSIC or a dance act; it’s a combination performance act by Manipuri singer/dancer Mangka Mayanglambam who practices an ancient folk dance form called Moirang Sai. While her dance moves are similar to the graceful and smooth movements Manipuri dance is known for, the music she performs is hard to categorize — with a sound dominated by flute and drums, it is uplifting and haunting at the same time.

Street Stories

STREET STORIES FROM SHILLONG HAS EVERYTHING A PUNK FAN looks for in a band: grungy guitars, low-fi arrangements and a hooky chorus celebrating youth and damning the world. Check out “You And I”, “Only Human” and “Happy” and you will know what we’re talking about. The four-member band, which is slated to perform at the Shillong edition of NH7 Weekender, hasn’t had any releases this year. Band vocalist/guitarist Pezo Kronu says, “Yes, it’s been a long time, but we’re just waiting to put out new music.”



Street Stories



Aलोbo Naga & The Band

Aलोbo Naga & The Band

AलोBO NAGA & BAND HAVE QUITE A FAN FOLLOWING IN THE NORTH East, especially in their hometown of Dimapur, Nagaland, thanks to their angst-ridden rock music [“Painted Dreams”, “Color My World”] and the occasional ballad [“Laughter & Tears”]. However, the band, which won the Best Indian Act at MTV Europe Music Awards in 2012, wants to go more pop now. Naga says, “Unlike our songs, the upcoming single called ‘Coming Back Home’ more pop, contemporary pop I’d say.” The band is currently working on an album, which is being mixed and mastered by Neil Zaza in the US. They plan to release it the coming few months.

Girish And The Chronicles



Girish And The Chronicles

WHO DOESN'T LOVE THAT CLASSIC SOUND? AND VOCALIST-GUITARIST Girish Pradhan has the pipes to impress more than just the oldies with a range everyone from Robert Plant to Rob Halford would be proud of. The founder of hard rock/heavy metal band Girish and the Chronicles, who got together in Gangtok in 2009 and moved to Bangalore in 2013, Pradhan, along with his brother Yogesh on bass, Suraz Karki on guitars and drummer Nagen Mongrati, have been performing across India and South East Asia as both - a tribute band to Seventies and Eighties hard rock and a heavy metal band. That is the very reason they have a packed calendar of gigs every month in Bengaluru, or the North East while also adding countries such as Vietnam, Hong Kong and Thailand to their tour plans. In addition to being an ever-affable rocker inspired by the likes of Bon Jovi and Axl Rose, GATC can mobilize audiences into a clap-along or raise their lighters to ballads such as "Angel," off their 2014 debut album *Back On Earth*. There'll be no problems taking off to higher ground for this lot.

The Scavenger Project



The Scavenger Project

THE SCAVENGER PROJECT STARTED out in 2007 as a collective of seven rock musicians from Aizwal, Mizoram, who played in different bands. The alt rock outfit didn't play many gigs initially, but over the years, managed to not only perform at big stages like Independence Rock (Kolkata edition) but also win a few competitive shows. The Scavenger Project loves to perform anthemic ballads and straight-up rock songs. Guitarist Victor da Scavenger says, "Even though it began as a project, we always wanted to make it a real band." The Scavenger Project released their first album *Empty Highway* in 2010, and is currently working on their second. "This one will be music video album, a set of audio plus video," says Victor, adding that it will also show the collective at their experimental best. He says, "The songs this time will more atmospheric and psychedelic, you know, with guitar delays and stuff like that. People will relate to it." The as yet-untitled album will release by the end of the year.

WITH INPUTS BY ANURAG TAGAT

We The Giants

BACK IN 2013, WHEN DIMAPUR INDIE ROCKERS WE THE GIANTS took to the stage at the Hornbill International Rock Contest in Kohima, they probably had the biggest following by the end of the three days it took them to qualify and end up first runners up in the band competition for a band that just came together 20 days prior. Although currently on hiatus while band members pursue other projects - frontman Kevi Pucho runs his own recording studio Element Indie while guitarist Lima Mongro also handles guitar duties for rocker Aloba Naga - the band are recording material for an upcoming EP. The four-member band took over the stage at Ziro Festival of Music in Arunachal Pradesh in a big way last year, proving that their adrenaline-soaked rock songs such as "Take It Away" and "Young Heart" - Pucho crooning over them with a whole lotta soul - sound best on a huge stage. Once they have more material out, conquering bigger stages won't be a problem for a band that rightly has the word "giant" in its name.

We The Giants



COURTESY OF THE BANDS (WE THE GIANTS AND THE SCAVENGER PROJECT); UNIVERSAL MUSIC (GIRISH AND THE CHRONICLES)

Reinventing Carly Rae Jepsen

UPDATE IN 2012, CARLY RAE JEPSEN'S "Call Me Maybe" lodged itself in the global brain for an entire summer, topping the charts for nine weeks and establishing Jepsen as a budding teen-pop star. Then things started to go wrong. Jepsen claims her label rushed out her next album, *Kiss*. "We pushed it through in two months to chase that song," she says. *Kiss*'s sales were disappointing, and Jepsen's next move was to take a role on Broadway in *Cinderella*. She found herself somewhat allergic to new music – instead, she'd listen to jazz and Eighties hits by Cyndi Lauper, Prince and Madonna as she jogged around Manhattan. "I saw Cyndi [Lauper] play in Osaka and was amazed that her songs still sounded so fresh, so yearning and painful," she says. "I wanted to put out songs like that, right now."

Jepsen took her time making her new Eighties-washed album, *Emotion*. Determined to shake her bubblegum image, she reached out to co-writers like Dev Hynes of Blood Orange and Vampire Weekend's Rostam Batmanglij. The result is an assertive, nuanced LP that shows off her songwriting chops: "Now, I can show up to photo shoots and be like, 'I'm so happy to be here, but I don't want to wear the fluffy pink dress.'"

Jazz, Prince and Cyndi Lauper: Jepsen

RACHEL SYME



A Little Love And a Spot of Light

Mumbai-based alt rock band Last Remaining Light finally release their much-anticipated debut album

ONE NAME CHANGE, THREE DRUMMERS, and one bout of jaundice later, alt rockers Last Remaining Light [LRL] released their debut album last month, just ahead of the music festival season.

LRL's self-titled debut has been a long time coming, with frontman Siddharth Basrur's compositions dating back to 2009 ["The Road"]. Says Basrur, "When I started out, most of the songs were written by



Last Remaining Light

me on the acoustic guitar and were meant to have a singer/songwriter vibe, but now the whole band is involved." While "Conclusions," penned in 2010, maintains its original hooks and riffs, it now includes an in-

strumental section that "makes it sound a lot grander."

Unlike the songs on the solo EPs *Chasing Rain I* and *Chasing Rain II*, which were centered around love, LSL has downplayed the mushy lyrical themes. Formed in early 2014, the original lineup known as The Siddharth Basrur Project included guitarist Anurag Shanker, bassist Adil Kurwa and Gautam Deb [of metal outfit Noiseware] on drums. The band now includes Karun Kannampilly, who also plays for Mumbai-based indie rock band The Koniak Net, on drums.

The band will go on its first tour, along with Kolkata pop band The Ganesh Talkies, starting September 4th. The 2Stroke tour will include performances at venues in eight cities over two weeks.

NABEELA SHAIKH

COURTESY OF THE BAND (LAST REMAINING LIGHT); AND MATHEW WELCH (CARLY RAE JEPSEN)

Tame Impala's Vision Quest

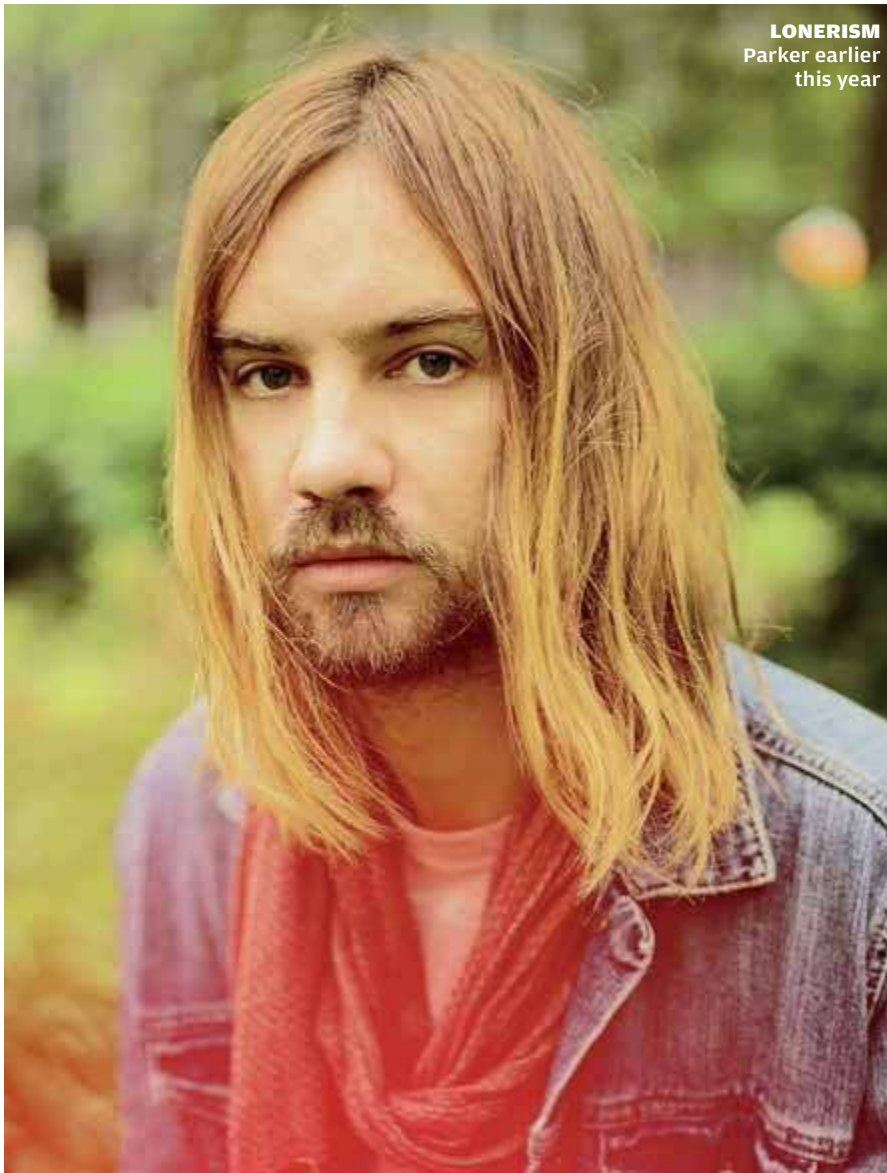
Kevin Parker is a psychedelic monk with talent to burn – now can he learn to loosen up? By Patrick Doyle

THE DOOR TO ROOM 1226 AT Austin's Hilton Garden Inn is propped open. Kevin Parker is in bed, and the room is a mess — empty cans of Tecate litter the tables; underwear, skinny jeans and scarves spill from a suitcase. Hangover cures — Advil, Tums — rest on the nightstand. “I like a messy hotel room,” Parker deadpans in his thick Australian accent. “It’s a little slice of home.” His memory of last night is hazy, but he knows he climbed down from a second-floor balcony at the hotel and ended up in a nearby creek, where he sat on a rock and watched the sunrise. Today, he wants to take it easy: “Fucking codeine and *South Park*.”

But it's the day before Tame Impala's five-week summer tour kicks off at Austin's Psych Fest, and Parker, 29, has work to do. So he struggles out of bed and helps his sound man lug laptops and keyboards into his room. They sit at a desk and connect a MIDI keyboard to a Mac, then turn on an oscilloscope machine, a device that measures electrical signals. They're typically used to check whether a TV or a medical scanner is working, but Parker discovered that if you plug an instrument into one, it produces trippy images. He's been projecting them on a huge screen during Tame Impala shows ever since.

Some bands hire a production team to handle onstage visuals; Parker does it himself — along with just about every element of Tame Impala. He played almost every note on the band's three albums by himself before bringing the songs — paranoid, self-critical head trips buried in a haze of psychedelic riffs and spaced-out synths — to the rest of the group to execute live.

The results have been impressive: Tame Impala just played main-stage slots at Coachella and Governors Ball and will headline Radio City Music Hall this fall. Paul McCartney's a fan, and Mark Ronson has called them his “favorite rock & roll band.” “Sonically, they're making some of the most exciting albums right now,” says Jack Antonoff of Bleachers and fun. “They sound like a really exciting blend of future mixed with the early Seventies — this incredible, bizarre blend.”



LONERISM
Parker earlier
this year

Parker's iron grip on his band's creative process has a downside. He spent months in a Paris apartment making Tame Impala's 2012 breakthrough, *Lonerism*, a process he calls “torture.” “I felt like I was going insane,” he adds. “I wasn't looking after myself, mentally, nutritionally.” He tried to put less pressure on himself for the band's new album, *Currents*. “But I wound up falling down completely the same hole again.”

On much of the new album, Parker struggles with an identity crisis; he recorded the album after a breakup and as he chose to embrace life as a young rock star. “I've always had these morals I've

sort of put on myself: that excess is bad,” he says. “I used to be into Buddhism and stuff. I was vegetarian. I was all about shutting things out.” This applies to his music too — the record trades rock riffs for more electronic and R&B influences. “I grew up in the grunge era,” he says. “I've always resisted the idea of being part of a machine, wanting just to be an artist in my own right. But at some point I just realized shutting things out took more energy than just letting it in.”

Parker's phone rings; there's a car waiting to take him to hear the vinyl edition of *Currents* for the first time. As he leaves his room, there's a note under his door —

a fan in 1212 is wondering if she can get a picture. "That's weird," he says, quieting down when he realizes that room is across from his. "Maybe I'll knock on her door. That's never happened before!"

A day earlier, Tame Impala stood on an Austin soundstage rehearsing, smoke machines and all. The mood is light – between songs, a few band members plan a visit to a New Orleans strip club, and Parker sarcastically wonders why some crew members have disappeared around 4:20 p.m. Parker suggests several tweaks to the songs: a little more bass drive during "Feels Like We Always Go Backwards," and for drummer Julien Barbagallo to play "a little more sensitively" on a new song, "Eventually." When the drummer doesn't quite get it, Parker takes a seat and demonstrates the part himself.

As the clock approaches 8 p.m. and the band runs out of beer, his tone grows stern. "We're running out of fuck-around time," he says. "Let's try to play them in a way that doesn't sound embarrassing." When multi-instrumentalist Jay Watson suggests they figure out one of his keyboard parts at soundcheck tomorrow, Parker barks, "There is no soundcheck. It's a fucking festival."

He doesn't sound like a dick, just a taskmaster, and the band is used to it. "He always wanted to control every element," says Watson, who also plays in the Tame Impala offshoot band Pond. "Like how hard I hit the cymbal. It took a few years to be comfortable getting told what to do all the time." (Watson doesn't complain about his job: "I get to drink beer midday!")

Parker has always preferred to work alone. He grew up in Perth, a sparkling city on Australia's west coast that's one of the most remote metropolises in the world, 2,000 miles from Sydney and Melbourne. He calls himself "essentially an only child." His parents split up when he was four; he went to live with his mom in the eastern suburbs of Perth, while his brother went to live with his wealthier father, an accountant for a gold-mining company. "I have almost no memory of my parents ever speaking to each other," he says. "They split up on bad terms. I assumed that's what family life was like. Just essentially a soap opera."

By the time he was 12, Parker was experimenting with multitrack recording. As a teen, he loved the Smashing Pumpkins, Silverchair and even Korn ("I think I had a lot in common with the lead singer. He had kind of family issues"). But Parker calls his first Flaming Lips show a spiritu-

al moment. "It completely fucked me up," he says. "I'm really into the way music can affect you, emotionally, spatially. The idea that music can make you feel like you're not standing with two feet on the ground is really interesting to me."

Parker briefly studied engineering and astronomy in college, but spent most of his time at a run-down duplex apartment with several future members of Tame Impala. The house became the center of Perth's weird, avant-garde psychedelic scene. "We listened to Sabbath, like, 18 hours a day," says Watson. They grew a huge weed plant in their backyard. Parker would get high and record kids playing baseball, then distort their voices through delay pedals.



SICK VISUALS

Tame Impala onstage at Austin Psych Fest in May. Like everything else the band does, Parker controls its trippy light show.

"Psychedelic music became a way of life," he says.

Because Perth is so isolated – "People are generally content to just impress the other people in Perth" – Parker was shocked when he was asked to play shows in Sydney and Melbourne after he put some of his original songs on MySpace in 2007.

In 2010, the band's first LP, *Innerspeaker*, earned it prime U.K. festival spots, and publications like *NME* started comparing Parker to John Lennon. In fact, Parker has never listened to a full Beatles album – he's more likely to play Daft Punk and Timbaland on the bus. Parker decided to embrace those influences on *Currents*, which adds slow-jam falsetto, vocoder and disco beats to their sound. While recording, he listened mostly to Nineties R&B: "As a teenager I thought I was supposed to hate it." Between sips of rosé at dinner one night in Texas, he spends several minutes talking about the Swedish music pro-

ducer Max Martin. "He's my idol at the moment," Parker says. He excitedly shares that only McCartney and Lennon have written more Number One hits, and notes that Britney Spears' "... Baby One More Time" was originally written for the Backstreet Boys. He starts singing the chorus: "You can hear it, right?"

"It's always been my fantasy – this idea of [being] someone behind the scenes, pulling strings, writing these fucking amazing songs," he says. "It gives pop music this intellectual side. It makes it more like a craft. It inspires me."

"I SURVIVED," PARKER SAYS IN THE LOBBY of Tame Impala's hotel in Williamsburg, Brooklyn, a month after our Austin meeting. The band is about to play New York's Governors Ball, the final gig of its U.S. tour. Parker's wrist is covered in wristbands from other recent festivals. He's not that impressed with the Gov Ball site. "It looks similar to a lot of the other festivals we've been doing," he says.

Parker just finished listening to a recording of the previous night's show in D.C., and he thinks the band has made a lot of progress in the past month. "It feels like the end of some epic movie." He can't wait to get home to Perth to see his girlfriend, an old friend from high school who works in advertising.

The band members eat a late breakfast, and hours later they're on the festival's main stage. "Holy shit," Parker says, gazing at the crowd. As frantic circular projections he designed dance behind him, Parker straps on a Rickenbacker and launches into a roaring Sabbath-like riff. He grows more animated throughout the show, which peaks with the Zombies-like "Apocalypse Dreams." During a drum solo, Parker lifts his guitar over his head and steps onto the drum riser before collapsing to his knees, and then rolls onto his back as he keeps strumming.

Parker says he used to avoid "classic-rock-show moves" like these – he'd cringe whenever he saw a frontman venture into the crowd to touch the audience. Recently, though, he had a change of heart. "I did it once," he says, "and all these hands reached out and touched mine, and the looks on their faces was sheer joy. They were happy, they were stoked, and it kind of made their day. Then you have this weird sort of like moral dilemma – on the one hand, it's a cliché rock move, but on the other, you made a lot of people happy for whatever reason. So maybe it's not such a bad thing. What's so bad about it?" **RS**

Gary Clark Jr.'s Texas Medicine

How the blues guitarist returned home to Austin and made a fiery new album

GARY CLARK JR.'S 2012 MAJOR-label debut, *Blak and Blu*, was one of the most acclaimed blues albums in recent memory. Recording in Los Angeles with pop and rock producers Mike Elizondo (Dr. Dre, Fiona Apple) and Rob Cavallo (Green Day), the singer-guitarist fused classic influences like Willie Dixon and Albert King with a love for Nirvana and hip-hop, yanking traditional American music into the present.

For his new album, *The Story of Sonny Boy Slim*, the 30-year-old Clark brought it all back home, recording in his native Austin in search of a more relaxed, familiar vibe. "I went in feeling vulnerable — I was very aware of the sophomore slump," says Clark. "I really wanted to just come home and be in the studio, hang out and go back to my house."

While *Blak and Blu* has a slick, L.A. feel, *Sonny Boy Slim* is pure Austin soul. Starting in March of last year, Clark headed into Austin's Arlyn Studios with little more than ideas and grooves, self-producing the album with his live engineer Bharath "Cheex" Ram-anath and Arlyn's chief engineer, Jacob Sciba. "These guys," says Clark, referring to Sciba and fellow engineer Joseph Holguin, "put in a lot of hard work to let me be in this room and let loose."



TRUE BLUE
Gary Clark Jr.'s newest album is all about hope

Sessions would often take place late at night and sometimes continue past day-break, fueled by beloved Arlyn co-owner Lisa Fletcher's combination of locally made vodka and fresh-squeezed grapefruit juice. Sciba grins and lifts a glass: "You want to know how we made

this album?" he says. "This right here." "I would come in the morning," says Fletcher, "they would still be at it."

The music that emerged ranges from the screaming "Grinder" (about a financially strapped family) to the stomping funk of the Prince-like "Star", to the acoustic gospel "Church." The album title, *The Story of Sonny Boy Slim*, seems to suggest a biographical element, but Clark says the album is driven more by a feeling than a concept: "The only real theme is, 'Through all the bullshit, there's always hope.' That's kinda it."

Clark recently had a son, Zion, with his partner, fashion model Nicole Trunfio. Earlier this year, he debuted material from *The Story of Sonny Boy Slim* at Bonnaroo, and

he'll soon be hitting the road with his longtime touring band, which also played on the album. "I really just wanted to put everything together and be 1,000 percent who I am," Clark says of the finished product. "This album is exactly what that is: loud."

JOE GROSS

IN THE STUDIO

A Teenage Climate Warrior

Meet the 15-year-old hip-hop artist impacting the environmental debate

COLORADO-RAISED ECO-ACTIVIST AND rapper Xiuhtezcatl Martinez is only 15 years old, but he's already a leading voice in the environmental movement. In June, Martinez stunned representatives of nearly 200 countries when he delivered an impassioned climate-change address at the U.N., and he'll soon appear in a short film being produced by Al Gore's Climate Reality Project. Right now, he's busy preparing his band, Earth Guardians (which also includes his 12-year-

old brother, Itzcuauhtli), for a main-stage set at the politically charged Arise festival in Colorado this month. "We don't just get recognition because we're young,"

Martinez says. "We get recognition because we bring a unique conscious hip-hop to the stage that people aren't seeing anywhere else." Martinez enjoys the attention his music is getting. But he's also young enough to know his entire generation is at risk if his message doesn't make a difference. "This isn't about the future," he says. "The crisis is here."

COCO MCPHERSON



Xiuhtezcatl Martinez

GET READY FOR 5SOS MANIA

Last year, Australian pop-punk band 5 Seconds Of Summer released a chart-topping debut and opened for One Direction. They celebrated their success by getting right back into the studio.

In January, they moved into a house in L.A. and brought in members of their favorite bands — Good Charlotte, Goldfinger and Sum 41 — to help write and produce an upcoming LP (tentatively due this year). Get ready for an all-out 5SOS blitz: They're headlining amphitheaters and arenas in America right now, and their label expects them to only get huger. "I think they absolutely have One Direction potential," says Capitol Records' Mitra Darab.

BRITTANY SPANOS



Luke Hemmings

TAMARA ROSE (XIUHTEZCATL MARTINEZ), KEVIN KANE/GETTY IMAGES (GARY CLARK), JAMES ATODA/EVERETT COLLECTION/ALAMY LIVE NEWS (LUKE HEMMINGS)

David Gilmour Finds Life After Pink Floyd

The guitarist on his new solo album and why the Floyd is really, really over this time

DAVID GILMOUR'S UPCOMING album, *Rattle That Lock*, is his first solo LP since 2006's *On An Island*, but it wasn't supposed to take so long. "I meant to get back to work earlier," says the Pink Floyd guitarist. "But certain things got in the way." Gilmour is presumably referring to the 2008 death of

Many of the lyrics were written by Gilmour's wife and longtime lyricist, Polly Samson, and the fluid, atmospheric music will be familiar to anyone who's heard Floyd's post-Roger Waters catalog. "A Boat Lies Waiting" is a tribute to Wright that features David Crosby and Graham Nash on background vocals. "I recorded the rolling piano on that song on a MiniDisc 18 years ago," Gilmour says. "You can hear my son Gabriel squawking on it as a baby, and he's now 18. Polly thought the rolling motion suggested the sea, and Rick's big love was sailing his yacht. It just reminded me of him."

On September 12th, Gilmour kicks off a European tour. It'll be the first time he's done a tour, Pink Floyd or solo, without Wright on keyboards in more than 30 years. Gilmour is still figuring out the set list – Wright's absence makes it highly unlikely that the Floyd classic "Echoes," which features Wright on vocals, will make the list. "It wouldn't be right to play that song," says Gilmour. "I might do 'Shine On (You Crazy Diamond)' again. I haven't completely closed the door to doing Pink Floyd songs. They're so much fun."

The tour hits North America in March; so far, only four cities have been announced. "I want to play places that are a bit magical and have a good atmosphere," Gilmour says. "My worry is whether I'll enjoy it as much as I did last time. That tour was such a treat, and I just hope without Rick there it will be as much fun."

Endless River got some Pink Floyd fans hoping the band still might have some life left in it, but Gilmour is quick to clamp down on those thoughts. "That part of my life gave me so much joy, laughter and creative satisfaction," he says. "We had a lot of good companionship 95 percent of our time together. I wouldn't want the five percent that was a little more sour to make my view of it less enjoyable. But I've done it. Getting into huge stadiums again doesn't fill me with any joy or anticipation. I don't think it would be pleasurable, so I think I can safely say goodbye to that now."

ANDY GREENE

IN THE NEWS

Su Real launches EP

Delhi-based hip-hop/trap artist Su Real (Suhrid Manchanda) is currently on his seven-city tour in support of his latest EP, titled *Brown Folks*. Following the success of his debut EP *The Grind* and his first full-length album *Trapistan*, *Brown Folks* will be Su Real's third release. The EP is Su Real's first attempt to sell his music digitally, via independent music platform OKListen. The *Brown Folks* tour kicked off last month in Mumbai, and includes Bengaluru, Kolkata, Delhi, Hyderabad, Pune and Shillong. The DJ/music producer, who was nominated for a VH1 Sound Nation award in the "Best Hip Hop Act" category in 2013, has already performed with the likes of Major Lazer, Pretty Lights, Michal Menert, Alo Wala, Humble the Poet, Nucleya, and others.

Rectified Spirit to release second full-length album

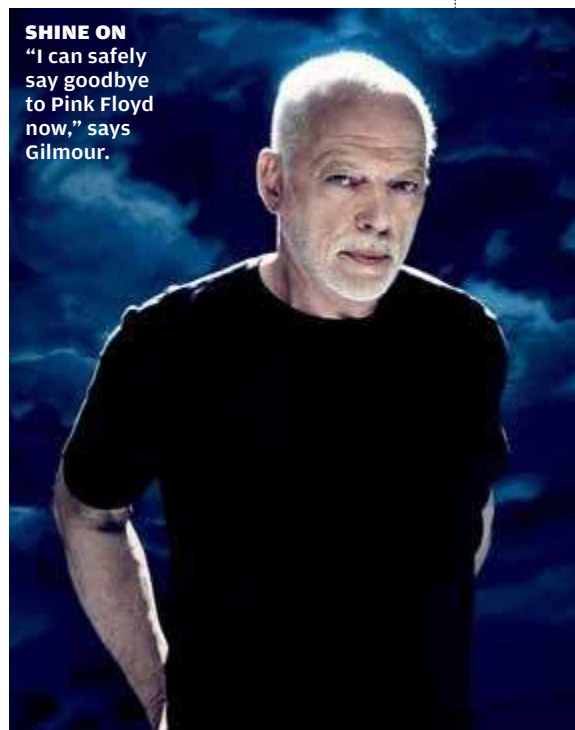
Guwahati metallers Rectified Spirit release their second album this month which draws inspiration from T.S. Eliot's *The Waste Land*. The eponymous eight-track album is set for release on September 10th via Transcending Obscurity Distribution. Produced, mixed and mastered at Zorran Mendonsa Productions in New Zealand, *The Waste Land* is experimental, with the music being a blend of old school power metal and modern, progressive influences. If the band's first single "Winter in Thine Eyes" is anything to go by, drummer Nishant Hagjer [who also plays for Delhi-based Undying Inc] is definitely upping the tempo on this album.

Ox7gen to launch new EP 'Recess'

Mumbai-based drummer/music producer Aditya Ashok – better known by his stage name Ox7gen – released his EP *Recess* earlier this month online, on portals like Bandcamp, OKListen, Soundcloud and Beatport. While Ashok's earlier music has remained largely centered around drum n' bass, he says the new EP will be a lot "broader," incorporating a lot more of his musical influences. Ox7gen will be promoting *Recess* on his five-city tour along with the Ox7gen Live Project. This year's lineup will include include Ashok handling synths/drum machines and Bradley Tellis [The Colour Compound] on guitars and synths.



Aditya Ashok
aka Ox7gen



SHINE ON
"I can safely say goodbye to Pink Floyd now," says Gilmour.

Floyd keyboardist (and his main creative collaborator) Rick Wright; the arrest and four-month imprisonment of his son Charlie over a 2010 political protest; and Gilmour's decision to transform some of Wright's last recordings into the final Pink Floyd record, last year's *Endless River*.

With all that behind him, Gilmour was finally ready to focus on *Rattle That Lock* (due out September 18th), which he co-produced with Roxy Music guitarist Phil Manzanera. It's a loose concept record that follows a man's thoughts over the course of a single day, as he contemplates everything from drone warfare to the sorrow of death to the challenges of raising kids.

Dan Auerbach

The Black Keys frontman on record geeks, his new band the Arcs, and why he hates cats

By Simon Vozick-Levinson

IN THE PAST FEW YEARS, WHENEVER HE HASN'T been busy selling out arenas with Black Keys drummer Patrick Carney, Dan Auerbach has booked informal jam sessions with a loose group of friends including Menahan Street Band saxophonist Leon Michels. "These guys are my oldest musical buddies besides Pat," says the singer-guitarist. "We just record shit for fun and sock it away." This year, Auerbach and Michels combed through those tracks to assemble *Yours, Dreamily*, the debut of the band they dubbed the Arcs. Auerbach, 36, says he's looking forward to their first tour this fall: "With these guys, we can try absolutely anything."

The Arcs album sounds like some lost psychedelic LP that you might find buried in a used-records bin. Are you a big crate-digger?

That's really what we are: record nerds. The last real job I had was at a record store, Quonset Hut in Akron, Ohio. I had graduated high school and completely immersed myself in blues music, but I was exposed to things there that I never would have heard otherwise. I remember this Frank Black and the Catholics album that I loved. We also sold a lot of Dead-head merchandise.

Did this album let you tap into your own Dead-head side?

Yeah, definitely. The Arcs scratch that itch for me — and when we play live, it's going to be magnified. These guys are so crazy-capable. We all got together and played recently, and it was so fucking exciting. There was a lot of improvisation.

The Black Keys are one of the last big rock & roll bands left. How do you like being the keepers of that flame?

When we tell people that we can't believe we're headlining Coachella or whatever, we mean it. We are not the people that you would normally associate with being at the

top of a pop food chain — generally, to do that, you've got to have some star charisma.

You had to cancel some Keys dates recently when Pat hurt his shoulder. Is he better now?

He's doing great. We played some shows, and he hasn't had any pain the next morning or anything. He can't raise his arm above a certain level, but he doesn't actually need to, the way he plays.

Speaking of injuries, you probably saw the throne Dave Grohl had built so he could play with a broken leg. On a frontman-to-frontman level, are you jealous of Dave's throne?

No! He deserves it. I don't need to see a rock star running all over the goddamn stage. My idea of cool is Hound Dog Taylor, and he always played sitting down.

How do you keep life on the road fun when you've toured as much as you have?

You don't. It's like *Groundhog Day*. Every arena backstage looks exactly the same. I heard that you're into boxing. Do you spar backstage on tour?

I brought a punching bag, boxing gloves and my jump-rope, and I try to work out. But not before shows. It's not like I get pumped up like I'm a WWF wrestler — like, oil my body and do a bunch of pushups before I run onstage.

Bob Dylan likes boxing too. Who would win if you and he got in the ring?

I would win [*laughs*]. But if we got in the songwriting ring, he would win.

What are you listening to these days?

I'm into Vince Staples. And I love Future's new album. It's tough as nails.

On one Arcs song, you sing, "Man's best friend will bite you in the end." I take it you're not a dog person?

No, fuck, I love dogs! It's man that I don't like. I hate cats, though — mostly because all the awful girlfriends I ever had were into cats.

RECORD DEAL
Dan Auerbach



GUESS DARE

THE LIMITED EDITION FRAGRANCE



Gearing Up For The Battle

UK prog metal band SikTh's vocalist Mikee Goodman on finally pushing out his electro-rock/metal project and working on new material



LOUD AND CLEAR
Mikee Goodman and
Yuuri B Joux

WHEN UK-BASED VOCALIST, producer and video director Mikee Goodman first visited Tokyo for a tour in 2004, he felt an instant connect to the country as both, a musician and a traveller. Says Goodman over a Skype call from London, “In 2012, I was thinking, ‘Where do I want to be in the world?’ Because I don’t want to be in the UK any more. I decided to get a flight to Japan. I knew a few people there, I stayed with them.” That’s when he began looking out for collaborators for his new electro-rock/metal project Outside The Coma, which started out as Outpatients with Tokyo-based singer Yuuri B Joux.

After a few UK tours and creating songs such as “Throw Rocks” to get them off to a start, the band renamed itself since the name Outpatients was already taken. In

addition to the rebranding as Outside The Coma, 2014 has been all about working on their debut album *The Battle Of Being*. While they are signed to Japan’s Zestone Records and a yet-to-be-announced American label, Goodman says Japan is a tough market for international artists to break into. Adds the vocalist, “It used to be amazing. You used to go to Japan and get similar treatment to when SikTh went to India [for metal festival BIG69 in January 2015] — you’re taken care of very nicely. For UK people, we love Japan. And I think I liked it more than anyone. It’s important for us because we’re a half-Japanese band. We’re talking about having a Japanese backing band.”

Outside The Coma currently comprises Goodman, Yuuri, drummer and beatmaker Kieron Pepper [who has previously played

drums for UK electronica act The Prodigy] and UK guitarist Charley Olsen and drummer Will Romain. They played at club festival series Camden Rocks earlier this year, which Goodman called “very strange.” The vocalist adds, “It was hard, man — from playing to 1,500 people with SikTh, selling out London, to playing in a little room in Camden, is very, very strange.” But the music does have a pull — their first official single “Flavour of the Weak,” which released in May this year, has a crushing mix of metal and the frantic vocal attack that Goodman is known to write. Except now, it’s not just screams and growls, it’s Yuuri’s girly accented English verses over Goodman occasionally joining in the takedown of the instant-gratification celebrity culture. While Pepper made the electronic elements and beats and wrote songs such as “Nosebleed” and “Outpatients,” Goodman also worked with Japanese guitarist Hayato Imanishi [from metal act Cyclamen] on *The Battle Of Being*. Says Goodman, “The thing is, it’s a flexible project. You can put us in a dance thing and we could do it — just two vocalists and backing track, if worst came to worst — we wouldn’t want to. But it all depends on how we can do it. Getting the music out is the most important thing.”

With the album slated to release worldwide on September 26th, Goodman, also a music video director, has plans to release at least three music videos, including “Can’t Find the Words,” which he says he shot nearly three years ago. Says Goodman about the delays, “It [the album] was meant to be [released] April, then July and an American label came in and they said September. You either throw it in the bin or say September.”

With plans to take Outside The Coma on the road in November, Goodman is also in the thick of it with SikTh’s upcoming six-track mini-album, their first new material since 2006’s *Death Of A Dead Day*.

“Getting the music out is the most important thing.”
— Goodman

The band recently moved into Chapel Studios in Lincolnshire, East England for two weeks to record. Says Goodman, “Right at this moment, it’s the best thing we’ve done. I have not experienced wanting to listen to SikTh music so much. I was on the train, and I was thinking ‘Oh should I listen to the SikTh album?’ I was that excited. I could never say that about SikTh before. I always give my honest opinion about these things and for me, it sounds amazing right now.” Looks like 2015 is one packed year for Goodman. Says the vocalist, “It’s completely crazy. I am always working now — I don’t really stop.”

ANURAG TAGAT

NIGEL CRANE

ISECOND THRASHING
(from left) Vishnu Rajendranath,
S Jayakrishnan, Nikhil NR and
Manu Krishnan of Chaos.



IN THE STUDIO

Chaos Pick Their Battles on Second Album

The Thiruvananthapuram-based thrash metal band re-enlist Delhi producer-guitarist Keshav Dhar for 'All Against All', due later this year

METALLERS ACROSS THE world don't mince words. When you ask Thiruvananthapuram thrash metallers Chaos what their second album is all about, their lead vocalist S.Jayakrishnan has a quick comeback: "It's about what makes us pure assholes. *All Against All* is the band's follow-up to their debut album *Violent Redemption*, which was released in 2013.

While the 10-track *Violent Redemption* was equally blunt about corruption and politics on songs like "Game," and "War Crime," Chaos, who came together in 2005, are faster, heavier and even more pissed off on *All Against All*, which deals with racism within India and blind religious belief, among other topics. The band entered the studio in late July, flying down Delhi-based guitarist and producer Keshav Dhar [from prog rock band Skyharbor] to track guitars, bass and vocals at a friend's home studio in Thiruvananthapuram. Later in September, drummer Manu Krishnan [from Bengaluru met-

allers Escher's Knot], the band and Dhar will travel to Mumbai to record live drums at That Studio. Says Dhar, "With this kind of music, drums just has to be played live. And he's a drummer who's got studio experience." Dhar also worked with the band to record, mix and master *Violent Redemption* in 2012.

Chaos spent six days recording with Dhar, working 12-hour days to track all parts and even wrote a relentless riff churner like "The Great Divide" in about three hours, which guitarist Nikhil NR says he'd just written lyrics for as a starting point. Nikhil adds that the pressure of time constraints actually helps them write. He says, "If you have the time to sit and decide a lot of things about a song, it may not have that rawness." Comparing it to 2013 track "War Crime," Nikhil says "The Great Divide" was also written in a few hours and is the second Chaos song to include additional riffs by Dhar, who also contributed to the title track "All Against All." Says Dhar, "Even though I don't play that intense kind of metal any more, it was fun. I was like, 'Wow, this is all in standard tuning!' The

producer, who will also mix and master *All Against All*, is all praise for Chaos's work ethic. Although Jayakrishnan says everyone, including Dhar, "did their homework," Dhar adds, "They are so proficient at what they do. We never got tired."

This time around, Jayakrishnan says they aren't even going to cook up an ominous slow intro like on *Violent Redemption*. The vocalist adds of whichever song they pick to open the album, "It's going to feel like a train just hitting you." He says he's particularly happy about screaming his lungs out on a track tentatively titled "Rise from the Ashes," the first of at least three tracks from the album they will begin playing live. Nikhil says the meanest song on the album for him is "The Enemy," which is about blind religious belief. The guitarist adds, "It's aggressive, but it doesn't mean it's fast. It's just mean, you know?"

The band has put *All Against All* on priority, looking to release it within 2015, although it would mean tracking drums, mixing and mastering with Dhar before Skyharbor heads off on a North American tour at the end of October. For Chaos, however, this album has been in the works since 2012, when they had just finished recording *Violent Redemption*. As Nikhil notes, "We came up with the lyrics first. That way, the music has to do justice to the lyrics. This album has come together so effortlessly." Jayakrishnan adds that the album clocks in close to the running length of *Violent Redemption*, about 35 minutes. Says the vocalist, summing up what thrash metal is all about, "It's short and to the point."

ANURAG TAGAT

COURTESY OF THE BAND



An
Gra



Inside
the messy,
prophetic
rise of
N.W.A.,
the most
dangerous
hip-hop
group in
the world

By **Brian
Hiatt**

Photograph by
MARK SELIGER



american angst

DR. DRE RUBS HIS MOUNTAINOUS right deltoid through a snug black T-shirt, not quite allowing himself to wince. His shoulder hurts. He has an online radio show to record, a sort-of-secret album to mix, a call from Jimmy Iovine coming any minute. But in the middle of an overscheduled July afternoon, Dre — genre-shaping beatmaker; oft-reluctant MC; mentor to Snoop, Eminem and Kendrick; walking, bass-heavy headphone brand — exudes a leonine air of serenity and

control, as if he's executive-producing his own behavior, moment by moment. A diamond-speckled watch is on his wrist ("I think it's a Rolex — it was a gift"), and crispy white Air Force Ones are on his feet (legend has it he wears a different brand-new pair each day). He's perched on the edge of an oversize brown leather ottoman in the dim lounge of the sleek, gated Sherman Oaks recording-studio complex he just bought and remodeled, after years of renting it out.

It was, under his current circumstances, a trivial purchase. "Right now, financially, I'm so fucking good," says Dre, with some understatement. In the mid-Eighties, a couple of years before the formation of N.W.A., Andre Young was crashing on his cousin's couch; he was so broke he couldn't afford to bail himself out of jail as he collected piles of speeding tickets. Last year, when he and Iovine sold Beats to Apple Inc., Dre took home roughly \$500 million. Witness the strength of street knowledge.

"I'm not a billionaire yet, man," Dre says. "I will be, hopefully. One day. But let me tell you something: I never have to make another dollar in this lifetime. For the rest of my life, it's just about having fun, being creative."

Dre turned 50 in February, and has had a lot of chances lately to ponder the full breadth of his life's journey. A big-studio but credibly gritty movie version of N.W.A.'s story, *Straight Outta Compton*, is out on August 14th — Dre and his former bandmate Ice Cube were deeply involved as producers, with an eye toward preserving both verisimilitude and their legacy. The film was directed by F. Gary Gray, who spent some of his childhood in South Central Los Angeles and made Cube's 1995 hood-comedy classic *Friday*. It lifts itself beyond the standard stuff of music biopics with its

attention to the realities of life in Compton and South Central in the Eighties, where it was easier to find an AK-47 than a job, where the crack trade, gangbangers and cops — under the militaristic command of LAPD Chief Daryl F. Gates — were all out of control. "You had to see *why* we did the music," says Ice Cube. "You know, not just 'we were young, angry niggas out of South Central,'

“We were in the middle of gangs, police brutality, Reaganomics, and there was nowhere to escape,” says Ice Cube.”

but why did we make those kind of records? We were living in the middle of dope dealing, gangbanging, police brutality, fucking Reaganomics, and there was nowhere to escape."

The film's most affecting scenes are unnervingly topical in post-Ferguson 2015, dramatizing the routine, dehumanizing LAPD harassment that inspired Cube to rap about cops who "think they have the authority to kill a minority" on "Fuck Tha Police," the protest song that riled the FBI and served as a harbinger of the L.A. riots three years later. "What's sad is that the 'Fuck Tha Police' record was actually 400 years late," says Cube, with a small laugh. "There's been a thousand Rodney Kings every year that we don't hear about — and just now with technology, we're able to really see these pockets

of bullshit that poor people have been dealing with forever. But that shit is still usually done in the dark — and that's what makes our movie relevant today, and makes N.W.A. relevant today."

A lot of musical groups tear themselves apart quickly, especially ones overstuffed with talent and ego, but N.W.A. may have set a land-speed record. The definitive lineup — Dre, Cube, the late Eazy-E, MC Ren, DJ Yella — made just one epochal album, 1989's *Straight Outta Compton*, recorded in a mere six weeks, with production that Dre now finds primitive. "Back then, I thought the choruses were supposed to just be me scratching," he says. "We had no fucking idea how big it was gonna become. We were just trying to be stars in the neighborhood."

Eric "Eazy-E" Wright's triple role as group member, solo star and president of N.W.A.'s record label, Ruthless, combined with his close partnership with their manager, Jerry Heller, was a stabilizing force: As N.W.A. finished their first tour, Ice Cube was on his way out, feeling underpaid. Two years later, just as N.W.A. completed their second

LP, *Niggaz4life* (which was musically more sophisticated but far cruder lyrically), Dre left, also grumbling about finances. "Dre was just gone," says Yella. "He said, 'I'm leaving. You wanna come?' I was like, 'Um, I'll let you know.' Until this day, I never let him know." By the time the album hit Number One, N.W.A. were dead.

The aftermath was ugly, especially when Dre and his friend the D.O.C. started Death Row Records with Suge Knight. Dre devoted chunks of his 1992 solo debut, *The Chronic* — and the entire, vicious "Dre Day" video — to mocking Eazy ("Eric hated it," says Ren). But the surviving members insist that N.W.A. were on the verge of a reunion shortly before Eazy's 1995 death from AIDS complications. "I really thought we was mending what was broke," says Cube. "It's sad, man, because I had so much hope."

"If Eric hadn't passed away," says Dre, "we'd have definitely been working on another N.W.A. record, and it would've been amazing. Eric and I talked about how stupid we were with dissing each other."

After N.W.A., Ren began a modest solo career that continues to this day. "But, you know, it wasn't the same," says the MC, who lives quietly in Palm Springs, California. Yella, like Ice Cube, went into the movie business, albeit a slightly different segment: He produced and directed some 300 porn films before returning to DJ'ing a few years back.

With its thrilling, troubling, often hilarious mix of nihilistic gunplay, casual misogyny, ghetto reportage and furious protest, *Straight Outta Compton* was both a great album in its own right and a cultural pivot point. It augured the coming dominance of gang-

Dre and Yella), drew its flow and subject matter straight from Ice T's "6 'n the Mornin'" and Schoolly D's "P.S.K." In 1985, one of the group's direct predecessors, Compton rapper Toddy Tee, condemned LAPD tactics in the underground hit "Batterram," named after the tank-like vehicle cops used to smash down doors without warning. And Dre, meanwhile, would listen

Everyone knew Eric Wright, at least on certain blocks of mid-Eighties Compton. You couldn't miss him. He stood five feet five on a good day, with an intriguingly singular speaking voice, a high drawl buzzing through his sinuses. He kept a couple of thousand dollars in cash in his sock and usually wore sunglasses and a Raiders cap over a Jheri-curved mullet. "He was the neighborhood hustler," says MC Ren, who knew him years before N.W.A. "He had all the tight girls, money, jewelry. He was about that paper."

But when Wright was in his early twenties, his cousin was shot dead, and he began to rethink his path. His first thought was to work in the post office like his dad, and Ren says he went so far as to take a civil-service test for the job. Then a more glamorous option presented itself.

Circa 1987, Dre and Yella were members of World Class Wreckin' Cru, a DJ collective — complete with shiny, Morris Day and the Time-style suits and synchronized dance moves — that had evolved into a recording act. "When Run-DMC came to the club," says Yella, "we saw how simple their show was — wasn't even a 10-minute show — and we, like, looked at each other and said, 'We can make records.'"

Dre would wear a stethoscope on stage and whisper-rap stuff like "I'm Dr. Dre/ Gorgeous hunk of a man." He enjoyed the female attention that came his way. "Dre would have one woman in my studio," recalls Cru leader Alonzo Williams, "and another one in the street spying on him at any given moment. He

thought it was funny as hell."

But Williams was nearly a decade older, with a taste for smooth R&B and old-school ideas about showbiz and respectability. Dre began looking for a way out. "We were kinda being controlled a little bit by Alonzo," Dre says. "He had the money and he heard the music a certain way that was much different than the way I heard it."

Dre had gotten to know 16-year-old O'Shea "Ice Cube" Jackson through his cousin, rapper Sir Jinx, and began calling on Ice Cube's precocious writing talents. Cube ghostwrote the danceable, Run-DMC-ish track "Cabbage Patch" for the Cru, which became a local hit. After that, Cube and Dre began collaborating on 16-bar mini-songs that Dre would include on what Cube calls "neighborhood mixtapes" — recorded versions of the scratch-heavy mixes Dre and Yella were doing for local hip-hop radio station KDAY.



Gangsta Gangsta

N.W.A.'s rise also signaled that, from then on, rock bands were going to have a much harder time freaking out suburban parents.

sta rap and all its permutations; created, in Eazy-E, the archetype of the drug-dealer-turned-rapper, a mantle taken up by acts from Jay Z to Migos; cemented the previously shaky status of West Coast hip-hop; paved the way for The Chronic, Snoop Dogg and Tupac Shakur; inspired movies like *Boyz n the Hood* and reached white suburban kids by the millions without compromise. For once, it was the listeners, not the artists, who did the crossing over. "When you're hitting on the truth and striking a chord, everybody wants to be down," says Cube. "I used to bump Nirvana records, right? That dude grew up totally different from me, but he struck a chord."

N.W.A.'s rise also signaled that, from then on, rock bands were going to have a much harder time freaking out suburban parents. "We thought we were so badass," Axl Rose later said. "Then N.W.A came out rapping about this world where you walk out of your house and you get shot. It was just so clear what stupid little white-boy poseurs we were."

For all its impact, N.W.A.'s music was more evolutionary than revolutionary, arriving from a clear lineage. Their de facto first single, Eazy's 1987 track "Boyz-n-the-Hood" (written by Ice Cube, produced by

to Public Enemy on the way to the studio. "That was our go-to," says Dre. "I was the biggest Public Enemy fan — I think it's what inspired the aggression of N.W.A. We just took a different route lyrically."

Like P.E., Dre and Yella strived for controlled chaos in their production, layering and weaponizing soul samples. But Compton also showed the imprint of Rick Rubin's work with the Beastie Boys and Run-DMC — the Compton track "8 Ball" samples "Fight for Your Right." (The influence is even more blatant in one of Cube's pre-N.W.A collaborations with Dre, where you can hear him shout-rapping like a cross between Run and Ad-Rock.)

As he would in his future work, Dre also brought in live instrumentation in the form of funk licks from session player Stan "The Guitar Man" Jones. And for a few thrilling bars on "Gangsta Gangsta," Dre stumbles upon the sine-wave synth whine that would define his mature G-funk sound, and much of 1990s hip-hop. "I didn't know!" says Dre. "We were green as shit, still learning."

The tapes sold mostly via a hip-hop entrepreneur named Steve Yano (who died in 2014) at his thriving outdoor record store at the Radium swap meet, on the grounds of an abandoned drive-in. “It was like, ‘This shit gonna be hood shit,’” Cube recalls, “so let’s talk about hood shit,” and that became our signature style.” Wright, who had DJ’d parties with Dre before his drug-dealing career, heard the mixtapes and was intrigued.

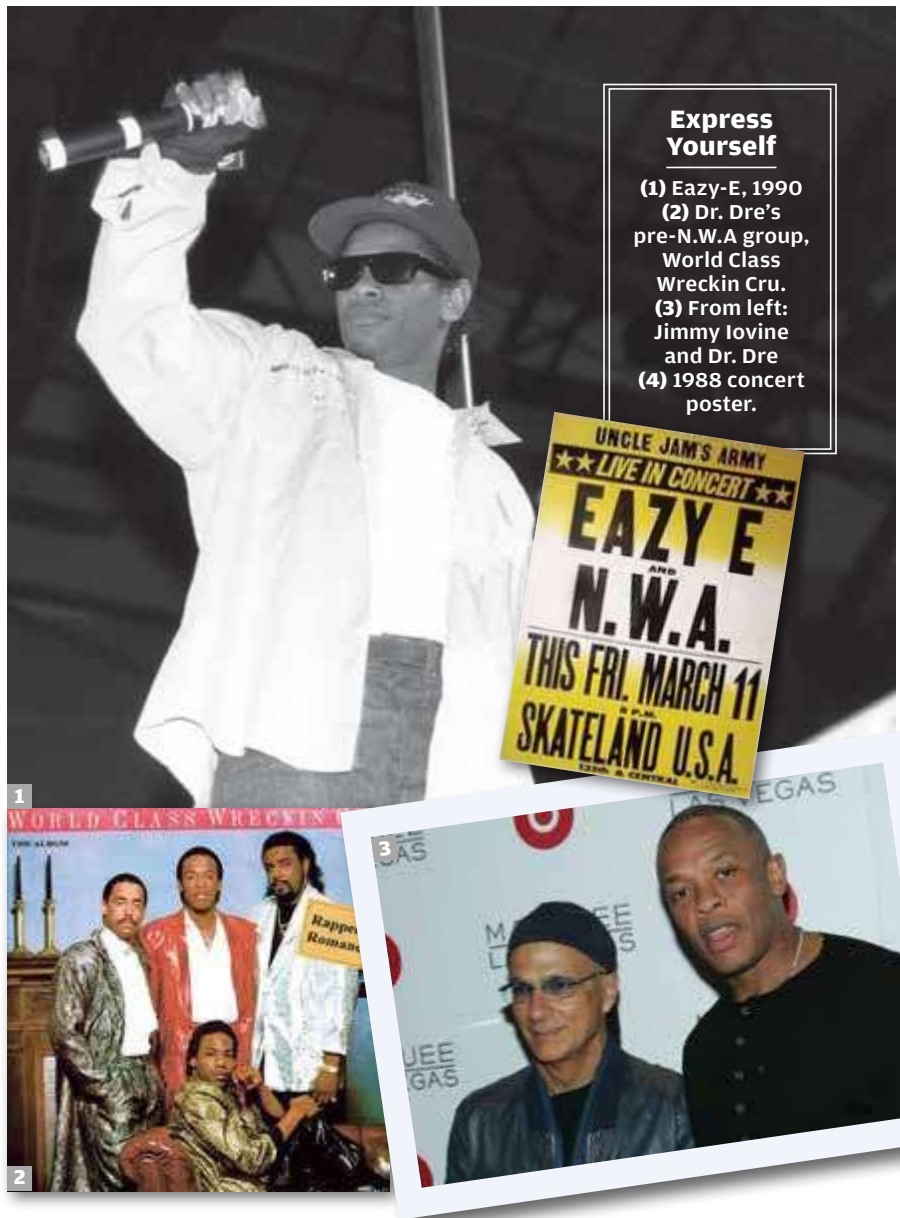
At the time, Dre was driving Williams’ old Mazda RX-7, and had racked up enough tickets to earn multiple arrests. “Dre was a wild dude when he was with me,” says Williams. “That car was an attention-getter, and he kept getting speeding tickets — and Dre didn’t like going to court.” Dre also got in trouble trying to protect his little brother, Tyree. “Dre is one of those guys that doesn’t mind fighting at the drop of a hat,” says the D.O.C. “He lives to knock a motherfucker out.”

Eventually, Williams tired of bailing Dre out. Some versions of the story have Dre calling Wright for the money, then agreeing to repay him with production work. Dre says that never happened, but that he did approach Wright with the idea to use some of his drug money to fund recording sessions.

Dre next called upon Ice Cube to write “Boyz-N-the-Hood.” Sitting in his high school classes, Cube scrawled in his notebook a vividly drawn tale of a young gangsta who “knows nothing in life but to be legit.” “It was neighborhood shit,” says Cube, “that we all seen, heard or went through growing up.” They brought the track to an ill-starred New York group called H.B.O. (Home Boys Only), who instantly rejected it. In a moment of intuitive genius, Dre came up with the idea of having Eazy-E record it, though he’d never rapped in his life. Coaching Eazy through the song, line by line, over an excruciating all-night session, Dre created a hit record, a brand-new rapper and the seeds of a world-changing group.

Williams was soon out of the picture. He admits he didn’t see commercial potential in the “reality rap” these kids were recording in his studio. “The cats I worked with in the business were NAACP-award recipients,” he says. “I couldn’t bring them a group called Niggaz With Attitude. They’d have thrown me out the fucking window.” (He’s currently working on a memoir subtitled “NWA: Not Without Alonzo.”)

Eazy-e was a curious mix of puppet and puppet-master: He was owner and president of what would become N.W.A.’s label, but as an artist, he was at the mercy of his ghostwriters and producers. The idea of forming a group came up while Cube, Dre, Eazy and Yella were hanging out in the studio, working on songs for Eazy; it seemed so natural that no one



Express Yourself

- (1) Eazy-E, 1990
- (2) Dr. Dre's pre-N.W.A. group, World Class Wreckin' Cru.
- (3) From left: Jimmy Iovine and Dr. Dre
- (4) 1988 concert poster.

can quite recall who suggested it. (Yella thinks it was Dre, while in Jerry Heller’s version Eazy masterminded it all.) When Cube jetted out to Arizona for nearly a year to get a certificate in architectural drafting, they brought in another rapper, Wright’s friend Ren, to write rhymes for Eazy. “‘Ruthless Villain’ was supposed to be E’s song,” recalls Ren. “But it was too fast for him, so when I rapped it, they was like, ‘Man, you might as well just get in the group.’”

The last piece of Eazy-E’s style came when Dre encouraged a nimble Texas rapper, who would eventually be known as the D.O.C., to move to California and start working with him. The D.O.C. wrote for Eazy’s solo debut, Eazy-Duz-It, and both of N.W.A.’s albums (including Eazy’s famous verse on Compton’s title track). “Between me, Cube and Ren,” says the D.O.C.,

“shit, we had all the pieces we needed to make Eazy. We made tand designed that motherfucker into probably the greatest rapper ever. Because in 1988, 1989, he was rapping with my voice, Cube’s voice and even Ren’s voice, as if they were his own.”

Completing his raid on the Wreckin’ Cru stable, Eazy hired their manager, Jerry Heller, a hard-driving, hard-living music vet who had worked with Creedence, Elton John and Pink Floyd — and heard world-shaking potential in “Boyz-N-the-Hood.” As Heller recalls in his memoir, Ruthless, Eazy told him he was the first white person he’d ever spoken to who “wasn’t trying to collect rent or arrest me.” Somehow, the two men became friends and partners — and to this day, the other members of N.W.A. blame their business disputes on Heller, not Eazy. (Heller declined to comment for this story.)

After every major label turned them down, Heller got N.W.A a deal with Priority Records, an indie whose only other big act was the California Raisins. "I heard 'Fuck Tha Police,'" says Priority Records founder Bryan Turner, "and I thought, 'I'm going to scare the shit out of a lot of white people with this stuff.'"

At first, MTV and most radio shunned N.W.A, but the album sold anyway, going platinum that summer on little more than word of mouth. But the relatively innocuous "Express Yourself" finally got them airtime. They also got an unexpected boost from one Milt Ahlerich, assistant director of the FBI's Office of Public Affairs, who sent a threatening letter to Priority Records, chastising them for purportedly advocating "violence against and disrespect" of law enforcement. "It made them even more dangerous," says Turner. "So then kids were like, 'I gotta hear this record. The FBI doesn't want me to hear it!' We probably sold about a million records in conjunction with that letter."

The song led to trouble on their first major tour, with cops refusing to provide security, a matter the group members took into their own hands, toting around a duffel bag full of guns. "Fuck Tha Police" wasn't actually part of the group's set – until N.W.A were pressured by local cops not to play it at Detroit's Joe Louis Arena. "We was like, 'Man, you know what?'" says Ren. "'We're gonna do the song!'" Cops stopped the show, and the whole group was detained, though never actually charged with anything. Cube and Dre had cooked up the plan without telling Eazy, who was furious – but only because the show had ended before his segment. "He loved the attention," says Ren.

Ice Cube had one key piece of acting advice for his 24-year-old son, O'Shea Jackson Jr., who makes an impressive movie debut playing his dad in *Straight Outta Compton*: "Don't have me frown the whole damn time!" But Cube was the angriest rapper of his generation, so a certain amount of mean-mugging was mandatory. "I know all sides of my dad," says Jackson Jr. "I had to humanize him a little bit."

Ice Cube grew up in the South Central district of Crenshaw with both of his parents in his house, plus a watchful older brother. It wasn't quite enough to keep him entirely out of trouble. "It's hard to grow up in South Central and come out squeaky-clean," says Cube, who has spoken of stealing car radios and other petty crime. "All that shit is coming right to your doorstep. You either em-

brace it or get run over by it. Fortunately, I started doing positive shit before I really got caught up. Playing sports, doing hip-hop."

For a while, Cube was bussed to a nearly all-white school in the San Fernando Valley, 25 miles from Crenshaw. "I realized, 'Dang, we really are poor. Shit. I thought we was doing pretty good! We really don't have shit in our neighborhood.' It was like going to The Brady Bunch or to The Partridge Family every day. You just see everything's better – from books to classrooms to facilities to teachers."

The experience played into his near-instant suspicion of Heller, N.W.A's manager. "He looked like one of my bullshit history teachers," says Cube, adding that he was accustomed to dealing with white people, so "there was no intimidation factor at all." (Cube does regret his use of anti-Jewish insults against Heller in his diss track "No Vaseline." "I didn't know what 'anti-Semitic' meant," Cube says, "until motherfuckers explained why it was just not OK to lump Jerry with anybody cool. But I wasn't like, 'I wanna hurt the whole Jewish race' – I just don't like that motherfucker!")

“Between me, Cube and Ren,” says the D.O.C., “we had all the pieces we needed to make Eazy. We designed him.”

Like pretty much every young black man he knew, Cube was regularly accosted by the LAPD from a young age. "When you in the hood, they get you early," he says. "They start fucking with you when you're nine, 10, just to put that intimidation in you, you know? They'll pull you off your bike, make you put your hands on the hood. You'll be sitting on the grass, just played football, and these motherfuckers swoop up and fuck with you. It just happens all through fucking life. Fucking with you if you're bad, fucking with you if you're good – don't matter."

Cube, who was just 19 years old when N.W.A released *Compton*, got most of his anger out in his music, but not exclusively. In the movie, after a financial dispute, his character uses a baseball bat to smash

up Turner's office. "That did actually happen," says Turner, who blames himself for not agreeing to renegotiate Cube's contract. "But we had such a great relationship that I didn't feel threatened for a second." Cube was, as Turner tells it, strategic in his property damage, making a point of smashing an old TV he had been pushing Turner to replace, and leaving his glass desk alone. "I swear to God, man, I remember him looking around the room trying to look for something to break that wasn't too expensive – so he broke the TV, which we laughed about after."

These days, despite a 22-year marriage, four kids and a highly lucrative career in family-friendly comedies, Cube says he hasn't changed much. Over the course of two interviews, he never takes off his over-size sunglasses, and is initially impassive, as if he saves his considerable charisma for movie cameras. But he laughs easily, and gets downright animated, despite himself, when he digs deep into the story of his youth. "I see myself as the same kid – just old," he says. "My anger is still there. But when you're young, sometimes you don't understand shit and you just lash at it."

It was easy for me to say, 'Fuck the police, fuck everything, fuck the world,' but that's not going to help you. What's going to help you is for me to say, 'Fuck the police, and here's how,' or to be the example of how to get out of the hood."

On the other hand, when he addresses N.W.A's depiction of women, he seems to channel his younger self, with rhetoric straight out of 1993. "If you're a bitch, you're probably not going to like us," he says. "If you're a ho, you probably don't like us. If you're not a ho or a bitch, don't be jumping to the defense of these despicable females. Just like I shouldn't be jumping to the defense of no punks or no cowards or no slimy son of a bitches that's men. I never understood why an upstanding lady would even think we're talking about her."

Dr. Dre has always been more distant, more mysterious than Ice Cube. We never forgot about Dre, not even close, but we've never really gotten to know him, either. He's a fierce but stoic presence in music videos; he has never tried to hide the fact that all of his rap verses are ghostwritten (by the very best, from Cube to the D.O.C. to Eminem to Jay Z), and he has never been very talkative in interviews. So it's nearly shocking to see the human foibles of the cinematic Dre in *Straight Outta Compton*, as played by relative newcomer Corey Hawkins: In his

very first scene, we watch his eyes well with tears when his mom slaps him hard across the face. Later, he sobs after learning of the death of his younger brother, Tyree; the real Dre had to leave the set when they filmed that scene.

"I have social anxiety," says Dre. "I don't like being in the spotlight, so I made a fucking weird career choice." He laughs. "That's the reason for my mystique and why I'm so secluded and why everybody knows nothing about me. I think it added to the character in the movie because people get a chance to see behind the curtain."

Large mixed-media portraits of Jimi Hendrix and Miles Davis hang in the halls of Dre's studio, and the lounge's windows show off a live room and mixing board where, in recent months, actual new beats by Dre have been coming to life. Not long ago, he quietly abandoned his solo album *Detox*, which had been first scheduled for release in 2004, then more or less every year since. "I made a record that wasn't good, and I refused to put it out," Dre says. "I had between 20 and 40 songs for *Detox*, and I just couldn't feel it. Usually I can hear the sequence of an album as I'm going, but I wasn't able to do that. I wasn't feeling it in my gut. So I really thought I was done being an artist."

But the more time Dre spent on the set of *Straight Outta Compton*, immersed in the past, the more he wanted to get back to the studio. "It just turned something on," he says. In under a year, he recorded *Compton*, a group of songs inspired by the movie that will serve as his final album as a rapper, with guest turns by Cube, Eminem and Kendrick Lamar. "This is absolutely it for me on the microphone," he says.

Dre subsists, at age 50, on a diet of "meat, vegetables and water." He begins most of his days with two to three punishing hours of exercise: 90 minutes of cardio, 30 minutes of abdominal work, the rest of the time lifting weights. But today, he spent his morning getting an MRI of his shoulder. "I had a little hiking accident," says Dre. "I have to get surgery. Just found that out a couple hours ago. So my day has sucked so far." He laughs. "Fuck it, I just gotta deal with it — get it done and get back in here and do my thing."

"I have a high tolerance for pain," he adds. "Both physical and mental." When Dre was 11 years old, he broke his collarbone in a car accident, and didn't mention the injury for six weeks. Out partying one night in 1992, he was shot in both legs (by "a random guy," per the D.O.C.) and went from the hospital to the studio, where he finished mixing *The Chronic* on crutches.

It was the D.O.C. who first befriended Suge Knight and helped persuade Dre to leave N.W.A. in '91 to form Death Row Records. Dre was still contracted to Ruthless, so Knight allegedly attempted a

Godfather-style solution: Wright claimed that lead-pipe-wielding henchmen loomed over him in a late-night meeting as Knight (falsely) informed him that his men had a gun to Heller's head in a nearby van — and threatened Eazy's mom while he was at it. (Knight has denied this account.) Wright signed Dre's release. But he and Heller immediately filed a RICO lawsuit to invalidate the papers. As Jimmy Iovine sought to acquire Death Row for Interscope, he helped negotiate a settlement — and Eazy-E ended up getting royalties on *The Chronic*. ("Dre Day" only meant Eazy's payday," he rapped.)

Dre parted ways with Knight in the mid-Nineties, but he never would quite go away. In what may be the final chapter of their conflict, Knight showed up on the set of a *Straight Outta Compton* commercial, apparently upset at his inclusion in the movie. Instead, he ended up killing a person with his car outside a nearby restaurant, and he is facing murder charges. "It's like, 'Why the fuck does this have to happen?'" says Dre. "'Why the fuck are you coming up here?' Now somebody's dead, and it's just so fucked up."

"[Death Row] was a necessary evil," says Dre. "Maybe I needed that element in my life."

Despite it all, Dre considers his time with Knight as "a necessary evil. I don't think I would go back and change anything that's happened in my career, because maybe those things were stepping stones to where I am now. Maybe I needed that kind of element in my life. The music would've sounded a lot different if I had been around a different group of people. I mean, there were a lot of deaths; it was really fucking serious. But I think something about all of that tension, anger and stupidity helped to fuel the creativity that went into making *The Chronic*, *Doggystyle*, Tha Dogg Pound's album *Dogg Food*, and *All Eyez on Me* for Tupac."

The movie alludes, barely, to the infamous 1991 incident when Dre assaulted TV host Dee Barnes, and doesn't delve into fresh allegations by his then-girlfriend, R&B singer Michelle, that Dre was abusive — she's accused him of breaking her nose and ribs and blackening her eyes. "I made some fucking horrible mistakes in my life," says Dre. "I was young, fucking stupid. I would say all the

allegations aren't true — some of them are. Those are some of the things that I would like to take back. It was really fucked up. But I paid for those mistakes, and there's no way in hell that I will ever make another mistake like that again."

Dre is often a heroic figure in the movie: At one point he bravely faces off with a crowd of thugged-out partyers in the halls of Death Row Records. (Asked if that incident actually happened, the D.O.C. laughs and says, "I'm-a let you figure that out.") But Dre's most cinematic moment, a drunken high-speed car chase in his Ferrari that ended with his arrest by what seemed like half of the Los Angeles Police Department, was all too real — and led to a five-month prison stint in 1995 that he calls "the best thing that ever happened to me."

"I came out literally a changed person," he says. "After my brother passed away, I had started boozing. When I got out of jail, I backed off of all of it, left Death Row, got married, just re-evaluated my whole life. My whole plan that I decided on in jail, I put that shit in action."

Dr. Dre puts on a black hooded jacket and walks down the hall to the complex's other studio. It's time to record the latest edition of his radio show, *The Pharmacy*, for Apple's Beats 1, with Cube and *Compton* director Gray as guests, along with regulars including Cube and Dre's old friend DJ Pooh, who co-wrote Friday. Cube is wearing a new-looking N.W.A. T-shirt, sunglasses and a Dodgers cap.

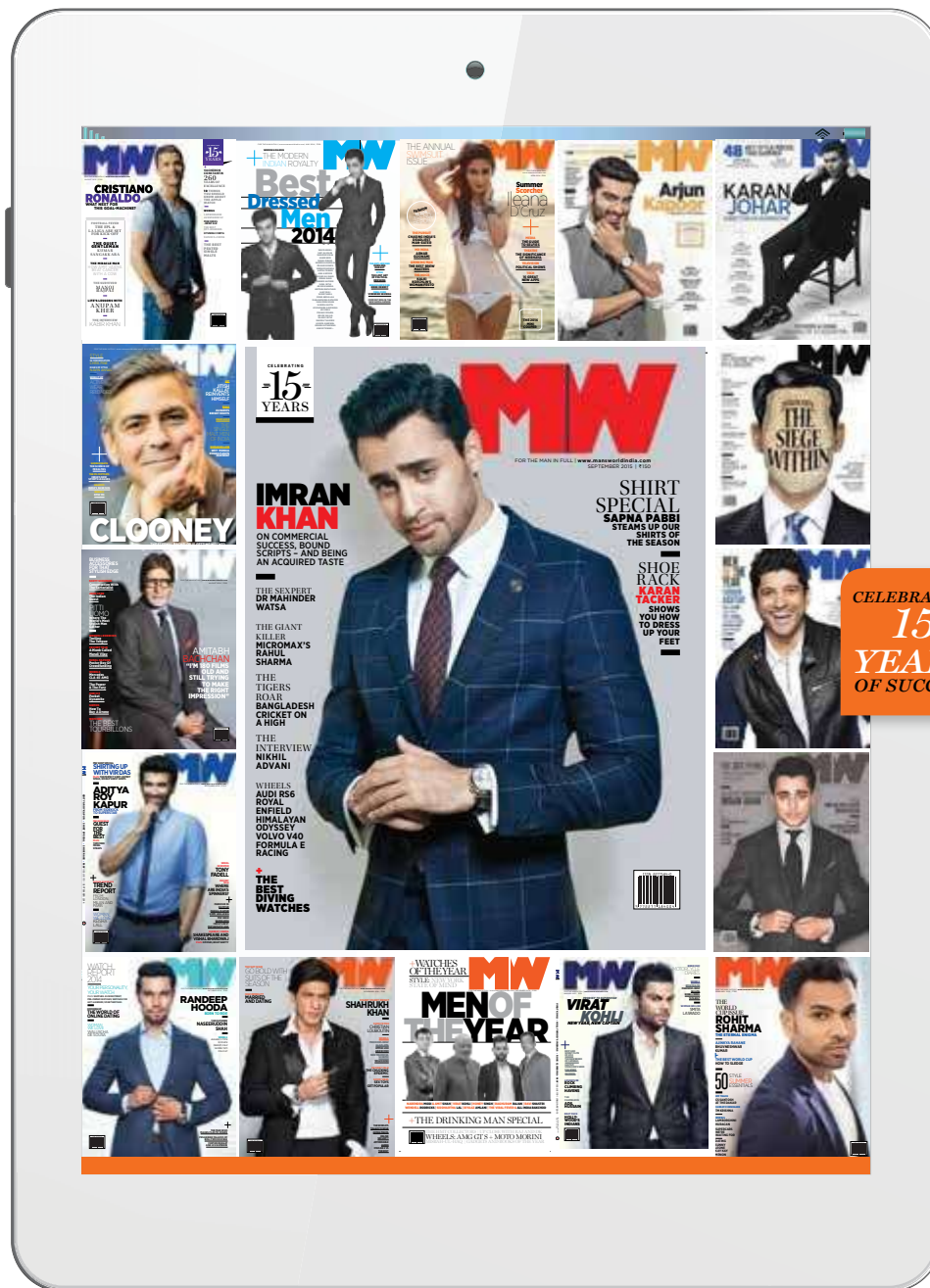
Everyone is sitting around a circular table, wearing Beats by Dre headphones, surrounded by cameramen. "West Coast Mount Rushmore up in here," says Pooh. The only awkward moment comes when one of the DJs mentions that Dre and Cube used their own money to supplement the budget for a couple of scenes. Dre shakes his head. "Yeah, but we're not going to talk about that," he says.

Eventually, Gray thanks them. "Seriously, you guys, I'm honored you let me tell the story," he says. "It's a snapshot of American history."

They end the show by having Cube introduce the title track of *Straight Outta Compton*. "A-yo, wassup, it's your boy Ice Cube," he says, in full hype-man mode. "You know who I'm with? My homeboy Dr. Dre. We made history in 1989." He pauses. "Dre, let them know what they about to witness."

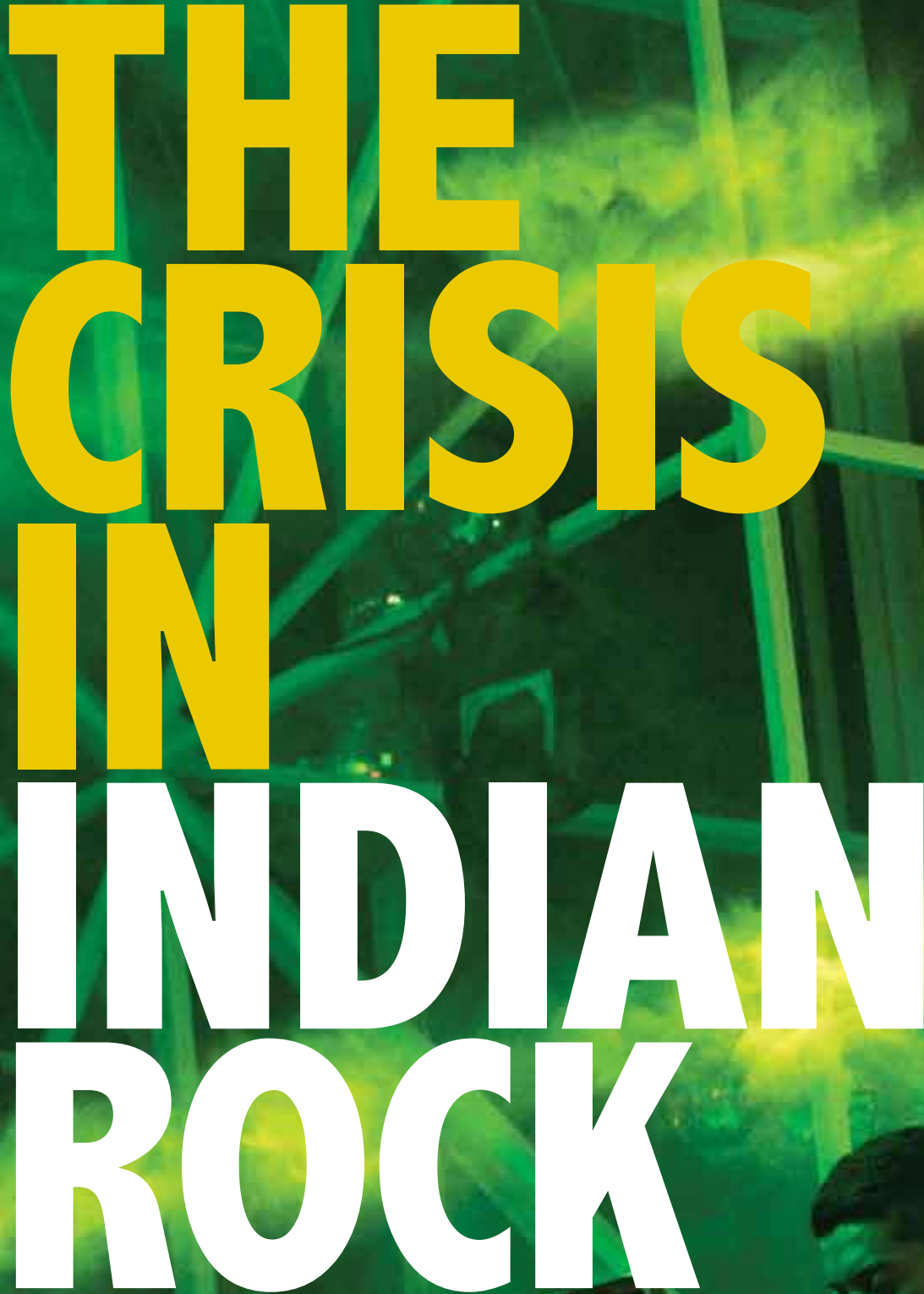
Dr. Dre smiles, and just as he did in a recording studio 30 miles, 26 years and many selves ago, he leans close to his microphone and intones 11 words — more reverently, this time, as if he's casting a spell: "You are now about to witness the strength of street knowledge." **15**

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A musician is shown in the lower right corner, playing a guitar. The background is filled with vibrant green laser lights that create a dynamic and energetic atmosphere. The overall scene suggests a live music performance.

THE CRISIS IN INDIAN ROCK

WHY IS THERE SUCH A POVERTY OF
TALENT IN THE INDIAN ROCK SCENE?
THE LAST TWO YEARS HAVE FAILED
TO PRODUCE PROMISING TALENT WHO
COULD TURN INTO HEADLINING ARTISTS
AND THERE ARE NO NEW CROWDPULLERS
ON THE HORIZON EITHER

BY LALITHA SUHASINI

ON A BREAK

Mumbai electro rock band Pentagram, a headliner at most festivals, announced a hiatus in 2014



IN 2014, ONE OF THE BIGGEST CROWD PULLERS OF BACARDI NH7 WEEKENDER MUSIC FESTIVAL, WHICH HAS BEEN SHOWCASING ALTERNATIVE MUSIC ARTISTS FROM INDIA SINCE 2010, WAS HINDI FILM COMPOSER AMIT TRIVEDI. THIS YEAR, THE FESTIVAL WILL PULL OUT ALL STOPS FOR THE COUNTRY'S BIGGEST FILM COMPOSER, GRAMMY AND OSCAR AWARD-WINNING AR RAHMAN. WHILE THERE'S NO DENYING THAT PROGRAMMING FILM COMPOSERS ARE A SURE SHOT BOOST TO TICKET SALES, MUSIC PROGRAMMING AT BOTH FESTIVALS AND CLUBS IN INDIA HAS HIT A DEFINITE LOW. SAYS VIJAY NAIR, CO FOUNDER OF ONLY MUCH LOUDER, THE AGENCY THAT ORGANIZES NH7 WEEKENDER, "THERE ARE NO NEW HEADLINERS."



The programming lineup at festivals over the last two years has featured bands that kicked off their careers in the Nineties. Delhi rock band Indian Ocean, who are still going strong, despite having lost two key members, Bengaluru alt rock Thermal And A Quarter, Indus Creed from Mumbai, and blues band Soulmate from Shillong, are among the headlining bands in the country. Mumbai electro rock band Pentagram announced an indefinite hiatus in 2014, Kolkata rock band The Supersonics, who were shaping up to be potential headliners also called it quits this year, and pop rock band Zero, who gained a cult following, are no longer together. So what does that leave us with?

Barring Bengaluru folk rock band, The Raghu Dixit Project, which was launched in 2007, Swarathma also from Bengaluru, who were formed in 2002, but broke through in 2006, and Mumbai electro rock band Shaa'ir + Func, also launched in 2007, there have been no new headlining groups in India. Incidentally, the music festival scene began taking shape around the same time, after witnessing a surge of talent in 2007. But the tide has ebbed. Indus Creed frontman Uday Benegal agrees, "Your guess is as good as mine. I haven't heard a new band in the last two years. I think it's a phase though. But had The Supersonics stuck around, they would have gone places, but they squandered that opportunity." While Benegal names rock band Skrat from Chennai, formed in 2006 and The F16s, also from Chennai, who got together in 2012, as two of the impressive new bands he's heard lately, it is the last two years that have been a washout as far as new rock talent is concerned.

Event organizers agree that the lack of new artists and headlining artists has been a major concern. Says Naveen Deshpande, founder of the Mumbai-based event management agency Mixtape, "This is probably a wave [the lack of talent.] I feel everything is moving towards electronica and metal has also kept the flag waving high." The genres of electronica and metal have indeed seen a spurt of new artists and potential headliners including Donn Bhat & The Passenger Revelator (launched around 2013), who are managed by Mixtape, and progressive metal bands such as Skyharbor (launched in 2010) and Mumbai-based Pangea (who played their debut show at Rolling Stone Metal Awards 2012). Adds music journalist Amit Gurbaxani, founder of Mumbai-based news and culture website, The Daily Pao, "We publish listings for events happening every weekend in Bombay and Delhi, and find that week after week, 80 to 90 percent of the gigs are by electronic music acts."

Rock as a genre has been stagnant. Gurbaxani disagrees saying, "As a habitual list maker, I keep a track of the number of Indi-



NINETIES PLAYBACK

(left) Thermal And A Quarter frontman Bruce Lee Mani and (above) Indus Creed's Uday Benegal. Both bands have been headlining festivals in India

an indie album and EP releases every year. Last year, there were over 130. At least 50 per cent of these were by rock acts, if you include sub-genres like folk-fusion and post-rock and leave out metal." But will any of these artists step into the shoes of say Pentagram or The Supersonics or TAAQ? We think not. Says Subir Malik, founder member of rock band Parikrama and one of the most influential artist promoters in Delhi, "I agree that there is a lack of new names but I think the scene is more localized now. Bands that may be popular in say, Kolkata, may not be popular across the country." Which brings us back to the question of a band that has a pan-India appeal making a breakthrough over the last two years. Himanshu Vaswani, whose company Bajaaio organizes the Big69 festival, dedicated to metal, also agrees, "There is a dearth of new talent. Electronica is the new alternative and alt rock is dying. But I also think that the scene is more promoter-driven now than band-driven." What Vaswani means is that the bigger the company or event that is promoting a band, the more exposure and following the band gets. For example, an event such as Ribbit, promoted by Pepsi MTV Indies that organizes it, has a better chance of drawing a crowd than just another gig at a venue. Artists such as Indus Creed's Benegal agrees, "People are going to events and not to watch bands. It's brands over bands."

"THERE ARE NOT ENOUGH HEADLINE-WORTHY ARTISTS YES, BUT I ALSO THINK IT'S BECAUSE THE SCENE IS ALSO QUITE NEW." — ANKUR TEWARI

It isn't easy for a band to sustain themselves. Ask a younger band such as The Ganesh Talkies from Kolkata, who broke through after winning the Converse Original Band Hunt in 2012 and they tell us how they've "martyred ourselves because it is impossible to be financially secure when you're on tour for six months and essentially jobless for the next six." Says Suyasha Sengupta in an email interview with Roll-

ing Stone India, "We've learnt not to depend on the band for money because you either get to play the kind of music you want without compromise or you earn. You can't have your cake and eat it too." Adds Indian Ocean's Rahul Ram, "It's also the age of instant gratification. New bands want everything so quickly. Paise nahin bante hain. [There is no money.] This could be a reason."

Another reason why bands lose out is the lack of mainstream exposure. Radio, one of the biggest influencers in music, provides little support to bands. There are 245 FM stations in India across 86 cities, and tremendous potential for Indian alternative artists to get airplay, yet there isn't a single channel dedicated to them. Indian Ocean's Ram told us in an earlier interview, "Nobody advertises for indie. It's not like they [radio stations] have a problem playing indie. But I don't see sponsors interested in it. There have been great experiments that have failed, like Sartak's show on Hit 95FM in Delhi. He used to play and promote indie bands a hell of a lot. Suddenly, the channel said, 'Sorry, we're going Bollywood. We're not making any money.' So gone. Off the air. Finished.."

TV too is no longer a platform for music discovery. Says Benegal, "When we started out, there was just one music channel, which would play a video over and over again. TV gave us a lot of exposure. There's

PARTING SHOT

Kolkata band The Supersonics called it quits earlier this year



“NEW BANDS WANT EVERYTHING SO QUICKLY. PAISE NAHIN BANTE HAIN” — RAHUL RAM, INDIAN OCEAN

very little opportunity for new bands.” The channel Pepsi MTV Indies, which launched in 2014, isn’t generating a buzz, as say, a show on MTV India or VH1 India would. The channel however is organizing shows across the country and enabling bands to perform at events such as Ziro Festival of Music. Says Sengupta, “Bands such as Skrat and PCRC have the power to influence an entire generation. We want to watch them on TV instead of the usual mediocre film music and mindless reality shows.”

The scene is also too saturated for viewers to follow just a couple of bands, according to Bobin James, Head, Programming, Talent And Artist Relations, Pepsi MTV Indies. Says James, “I personally believe that the age of the superstar band is over. When Indian Ocean, Pentagram and Indus Creed broke into public consciousness, there weren’t too many other bands. So the attention per listener that they managed to derive was very high. I do not agree with the idea that there is a paucity of tal-

ent. But yes, you are perhaps right in saying that there is a paucity of headliners.”

The performance and festival culture in India is still in its nascent stages, feels vocalist and songwriter Ankur Tewari, who is the frontman of the Hindi rock band Ankur Tewari And The Ghalat Family besides being the programming head of Pepsi MTV Indies. Says Tewari, “You could say that there are not many talented artists as there should be. There are not enough headline-worthy artists yes, but I also think it’s because the scene is also quite new.” Tewari also believes that several upcoming bands including his own [formed in 2009] are still finding their feet as performance artists. Adds Tewari, “Unfortunately, new bands don’t pay enough attention to live performances and just don’t have the bandwidth for big stages. We too are consciously working on how to appeal to festival audiences and perform on big stages. There is a big difference in being a great band in the studio and a great band on stage.”

The Daily Pao’s Gurbaxani also blames the lack of music venues to support the scene. He says, “Places and events such as B69 and Live From The Console where the focus was on the music and nothing else seemed like the incubators that would help new bands grow, but they’re practically not around today. Instead, we have more and more bars and restaurants where music is an ‘add-on’, where bands are usually programmed on traditionally slow Thursday nights.” At venues such as Blue Frog and to an extent, Hard Rock Café, upcoming and mid-level bands are programmed during week nights with the weekends reserved for DJs, adds Gurbaxani.

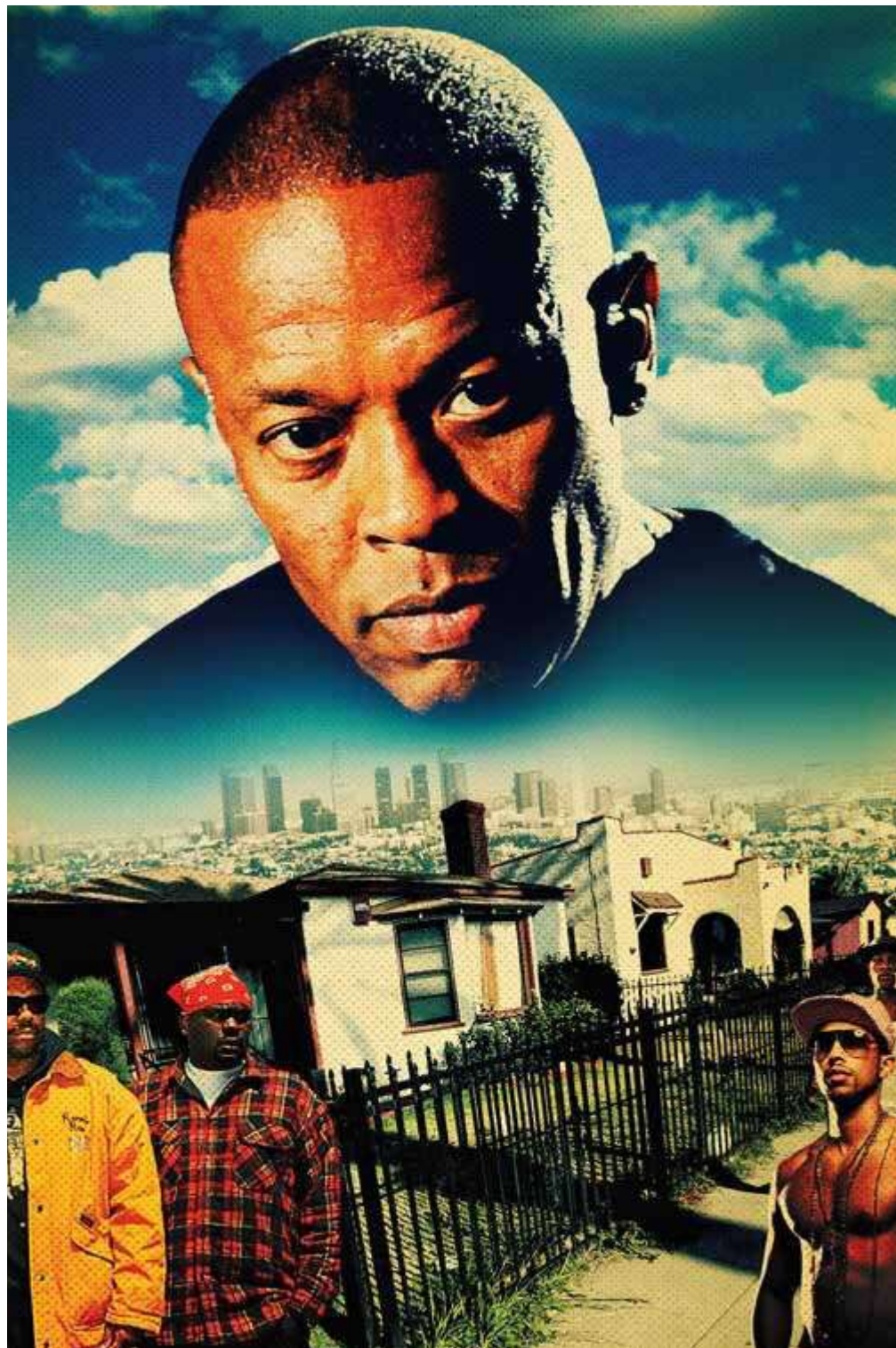
But the fact remains that there are no new promising artists or rock bands. Singer songwriter Nischay Parekh from Kolkata, who was featured in our Artists To Watch Out For segment in 2013, and Prateek Kuhad from Delhi are the two artists who come to mind. Both of them are capable of holding their own at club gigs and festival stages, but no new band has emerged in the last two years that has compelled us to believe that this is the future of rock in India. Tewari believes that younger bands would do well with mentoring from experienced bands. Says Sengupta, “If no new talent has emerged in the last two years, then I think as musicians, as potential role models, we have failed to inspire. I think we should really sit down and rethink why we’re all here in the first place.”

Reviews

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Dr. Dre Goes Back to 'Compton'



One of hip-hop's all-time greats sums up his legacy on a brilliant, confounding album



Dr. Dre

Compton Aftermath/Interscope

★★★★

BY JONAH WEINER

Who in the world has better ears than Andre Young? Throughout his many incarnations, the common thread in Dr. Dre's career has been his ability to hear things differently from everyone else, and his certitude that millions of paying customers will want to hear those things too. Paradoxically, he's been both prolific and patient: It doesn't seem like he's ever stopped working, and yet somehow 16 years have elapsed since his last solo LP.

For much of that time, he's said, he was working on a solo record to follow up 1992's landmark *The Chronic* and 1999's lushly raucous *2001*. The project — which grew increasingly mythical as time passed — consisted of a title, *Detox*, and little else. Now, with scant warning, Dre's solo return is upon us, with the twist that it isn't *Detox* at all. Maybe it's marketing: How could anything meet the wild expectations tied to that name? Or maybe the dream of *Detox* paralyzed Dre, and the only way to free himself was to set his sights elsewhere.

So he set them on his past. *Compton* is a companion piece to the new N.W.A biopic, and the album's backward gaze is evident from the intro, where

PHOTOGRAPHS IN ILLUSTRATION BY C FLANIGAN/FILMMAGIC; PATRICK T. FALLON/BLOOMBERG/GETTY IMAGES; NICK UT/AP IMAGES

Illustration by SEAN MCCABE

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narration from an old TV documentary describes how Dre's California hometown went from black-middle-class idyll to a crime-ravaged "extension of the inner city." Dre reminisces over past indignities ("Face down on the pavement with the billy clubs...") and glories ("...Now it's 'Fuck Tha Police' all up in the club") — but this is no dusty museum tour. *Compton* contains some of his most ambitious production ever, combining the layered bombast and narcotic ooze of his catalog's peaks with a bunch of bold new tricks. On standouts like "Talk About It" and "Genocide," Dre and his co-producers manage insane juggling acts between throbbing funk bass, jazz trumpet, extended high-hat solos, acoustic guitars and irresistibly pounding drums. Lyrically, *Compton* is not only vibrant but full of an indignation that suggests world-beating success has done little to lessen the vitriol that fueled Dre back in N.W.A. On "Issues," co-starring Ice Cube, Dre declares, "Fuck money, that shit could never change me." The line seems at once boastful and true, for better and worse: The track ends with a jarring fantasy about a woman's murder.

Throughout, Dre's rhyming (aided as always by co-writers) is impressive. He trades his stentorian boom for double-time syncopations and even bursts of song — Eminem and Kendrick Lamar, both of whom came, clearly rubbed off on him. The latter in other ways, perhaps: This is Dre's most explicitly political album, featuring lines from him and guests that evoke police violence, particularly the killings of Michael Brown ("Blood on the cement, black folks grieving") and Eric Garner ("I can't breathe, I can't breathe"). He's still full of contradictions — on "Animals," he calls himself a "product of the system, raised on government aid," but on "Darkside/Gone," he raps, with palpable disgust, that "anybody complaining about their circumstances lost me, homey." It adds up to an album by turns confounding and enthralling. It's no *Detox*. It's something realer, and better.



Page, Bonham, Plant and Jones, 1977

A Revealing Last Look Inside Zeppelin's Vault

A deluxe reissue of 1982's 'Coda' is surprisingly great, with outtakes that span the band's full trailblazing career

Led Zeppelin Coda Atlantic/Swan Song ★★★★★



Released in 1982, two years after the death of drummer John Bonham, *Coda* was a late goodbye from the rest of Led Zeppelin — singer Robert Plant, bassist John Paul Jones and founding guitarist Jimmy Page — and paltry closure for everyone else: a mere half-hour of outtakes, including a drum solo. Three tracks were unused songs from 1979's *In Through the Out Door*, an awkward embrace of New Wave electronics and pop romanticism. The contrast between those songs and *Coda*'s opener, the early-prime bonfire "We're Gonna Groove," was not flattering. For the first time, in that threadbare collection, the most audacious hard-rock band of the Seventies sounded like a spent force.

Three decades later, *Coda* is the unlikely closing triumph in Page's series of deluxe Zeppelin reissues: a dynamic pocket history in rarities, across three discs with 15 bonus tracks, of his band's epic-blues achievement. There are familiar strays, such as "Baby Come On Home," from the sessions for 1969's *Led Zeppelin*, and the 1970 B side "Hey, Hey, What Can I Do." But Page has gone

deep. "Sugar Mama," cut for and left off *Led Zeppelin*, already suggests the tightly wound textural fury of *Led Zeppelin II*. "If It Keeps On Raining" is a truly alternate take of "When the Levee Breaks," on *Led Zeppelin IV* — less titanic, with more worried-blues nuance in Plant's vocal — and two long-bootlegged 1972 recordings by Page and Plant, made in India with members of the Bombay Orchestra, evoke their determined exploration of the global routes and branches in American blues and Celtic folk, on the way to the rugged spectacle of 1975's *Physical Graffiti*.

Page's final round of reissues includes two other sets: new editions of *In Through the Out Door* and the feral-guitar overload of 1976's *Presence*. The extra mixes essentially mirror the original LPs, with a refreshing exception: "10 Ribs & All/Carrot Pod Pod (Pod)," an instrumental sketch from the *Presence* sessions starring Jones' jazz-nocturne piano. Even in *Coda*'s expanded context, the *Out Door* orphans "Ozone Baby" and "Darlene" are still lesser Zeppelin, an inconclusive response to the edge and concision of punk.

Rebirth, of course, was not an option; Bonham's death froze his band's legacy in place. Yet it's a story that keeps on giving. Once an afterthought, *Coda* is now a classic Led Zeppelin album: deep lore from their road to legend.

KEY TRACK:
"If It Keeps
On Raining"

DAVID FRICKE



Palehound

Dry Food Exploding in Sound

★★★★

Boston singer-guitarist twists and turns delightfully

The latest act to emerge from a young Boston scene making rock worth geeking out over again (see Speedy Ortiz and Krill) is Palehound — a.k.a. 21-year-old Ellen Kempner, whose songs morph as unmappably as her emotions. She also plays the hell out of a guitar, but only when necessary to make her point. Her debut is antsy and ambivalently sexy: On “Healthier Folk,” she’s “watching cuties hit the half-pipe” feeling only “half-ripe”; on “Dixie,” with fingerpicking that hints at a Villa-Lobos recital, she dreams of “breasts like eyes” one moment and retches the next. Yes, she’s probably heard Liz Phair, Pavement and *Meet the Beatles*, like all of us. Now watch her go.

WILL HERMES



Rob Thomas

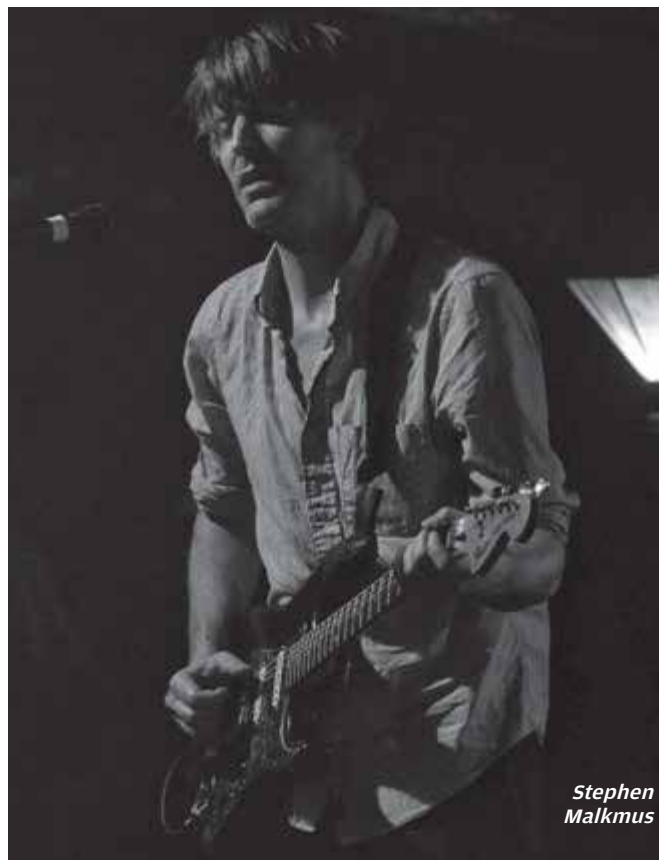
The Great Unknown

Emblem/Atlantic

★★★

Reliable pop-rockers doesn't disappoint on solo album

Don't let the title fool you: Rob Thomas remains a known quantity on his third solo album. While that means there aren't many surprises, the good news is he's still the same consummate pop-rock craftsman who has been making it all sound so smooth for years. Reunited with Matchbox Twenty producer Matt Serletic, Thomas piles on the hooks right from the opener, “I Think We'd Feel Good Together,” a soulful come-on. Even catchier is “Hold On Forever” — it's pure acoustic-guitar bliss. Elsewhere, the title tune is an atmospheric ballad about “driving through the valley of the great unknown.” With Thomas at the wheel, you can trust the journey. **CHUCK ARNOLD**



Stephen Malkmus

Lost Treasures From the Dawn of Indie Rock

Rarities set collects illuminating B sides and live tracks from the beginning of Pavement's road

Pavement The Secret History Vol. 1 Matador ★★★★★½



Nearly a quarter-century after it was released, Pavement's 1992 debut, *Slanted and Enchanted*, is still arguably the greatest indie-rock LP of all time — an offhand masterwork of magic-hour guitar static, thrift-shop melodic charm and singer-guitarist Stephen Malkmus' poker-faced romanticism. Pavement were on an amazing run at the time, keeping their ravenous fans fed with singles, EPs and much-bootlegged radio sessions. This vinyl-only rarities set is the best repackaging that material has received. The finest 10 songs here would make for their own sublime album — opening with the noir noise candy of “Sue Me Jack,” flowing into drowsily gorgeous moments like “Greenlander” and “So Stark (You're a Skyscraper),” and ending high and lonesome with “Secret Knowledge of Backroads,” where Malkmus mumbles, “Hunter called, said to me, ‘It's not as good as the first EP.’” There's also an on-fire 1992 show, where the then-mysterious band can be heard transforming insane hype into the promise it'd spend the rest of the Nineties making good on. In 2015, it sounds like Eden. But it doesn't sound dated — mainly because so many bands are still feasting on Pavement's ideas.

KEY TRACKS:
“Sue Me Jack,”
“Greenlander”

JON DOLAN



Buddy Guy

Born to Play Guitar RCA

★★★½

A blues great serves up an apt reminder of his mastery

Guitarist Buddy Guy — one of the last working giants from the electric blues' greatest generation — traces his life in mission and missing, from the crackling title cut to the B.B. King memorial “Flesh And Blood,” sung with Van Morrison, and “Come Back Muddy,” a message to Guy's late boss, Muddy Waters. Guy co-wrote just four songs here, but he sings and solos with reliable ferocity; two tracks with harpist Kim Wilson evoke his classic partnership with Junior Wells. “I was born to play the guitar/ People, I got blues running through my veins,” Guy sings — lines he didn't write but lived. In the blues, that's what matters.

DAVID FRICKE



Public Enemy

Man Plans God Laughs

SPITdigital ★★★★★

The loudest voices in hip-hop aren't getting any quieter

“Here we come from another time,” Chuck D raps on Public Enemy's 13th studio album. In fact, PE's iconic rap radicalism is as timely as ever in the era of Black Lives Matter, and a couple of tracks here push an argument for their relevance by echoing the spacey minimalism of today's hip-hop. But 55-year-old Chuck D and 56-year-old Flavor Flav are at their best flying the old-school flag, kicking Afrocentric rage over chaotically noisy tracks like “Praise The Loud” or the low-slung funk of “Give Peace A Damn.” If their voices sound a little worn, blame the apathetic fools Chuck attacks in the Rolling Stones-sampling “Honky Talk Rules” for not heeding his message years ago.

JON DOLAN

GAMES



PLAY IT AGAIN
Rare Replay,
comprising 30 old
and new games, is a
collector's treasure

Dirty Thirty

This is the mother-lode – a compilation of 30 games, most of which every gamer should have in their collection

By Atul Kumar

Rare Replay
Microsoft Game Studios
Xbox One, Rs. 2,399

★★★★★

RARE REPLAY IS WHAT HAPPENS when the Microsoft-owned game developer, Rare, decides to release 30, yes 30 of its games from the days of ancient consoles like the ZX Spectrum, to more recent machines like the Xbox 360. It's a veritable treasure trove of gaming goodness that does a fantastic job of showing how gaming has evolved over the years. From classics like *Jetpac* and *Battletoads* to newer games like *Kameo* and *Viva Piñata*, there's something

for everyone.

Aside from 30 games crammed into a single disc, it has a slew of behind the scenes features such as concept art, music, and video clips showing off the history of Rare, information on unreleased games, and the development process behind several key titles. In addition to this, there's the Snapshots section. What this does is let players indulge in small, bite-sized challenges based on the first 16 games on the disc, usually around obtaining a certain number of points in a given amount of time.

From a technical standpoint, *Rare Replay* is fantastic.

Barring one or two titles that look extremely dated such as *Killer Instinct Gold*, most of them still hold up and are rather playable, even if they're letterboxed with black bars on either side of the screen. We ran through all 30 games and discovered that they controlled just as they did back in the day. And while there's very little in the way of graphical touch-ups, it's a solid, value-for-money compilation that's hard to ignore simply due to the number of games available.

If you're a fan of Rare or not, this compilation is well worth checking out, and at Rs. 2,399, the price makes it even sweeter.

On the Shelf



Geneva shoes by Spunk

Contemporary fashion and lifestyle brand Spunk unveils Geneva shoes this week for its fashion forward patrons. Crafted out of pure suede leather, the shoe is made of EVA and rubber soles for all-day comfort and style. The new collection takes care of the wearer's feet as the sole is made of special PU foam and enables the feet to breathe and stay odor-free. Adding to it, the sockliner is also bacteria repellent, fast drying and washable. Apart from the royal blue shoe with a stylish fluorescent green lining, the range also includes brown, grey and navy blue variants.

Tour Sound Training by Harman Professional

Harman recently organized an intensive three-day tour sound training programme for sound engineers and leading sound rental companies. International industry experts like Brian Pickowitz and Eric Friedlander conducted hands-on workshops which covered all of HARMAN's leading brands in the area of live sound including JBL, Soundcraft, Crown, Dbx, BSS and AKG. Participants at the training were also given a demo of the recently launched service app "HAPPI."



1915 501® by Levi's

Fall 2015 commemorates the 100th anniversary of the partnership between Levi Strauss & Co. and Cone® Denim. To mark this anniversary, Levi's® Fall/Winter 2015 collection has launched the 1915 501® Jean. The Levi's 2015 Fall collection boasts designs that include the most advanced stretch and recovery, signature authentic Levi's® details and world-class finishing.



Ignite XT by Puma

Used by the "fastest man in the world" Usain Bolt himself, the Ignite XT does exactly what the name suggest – 'ignites' your training sessions. The shoes are ideal for athletes looking to maximize energy and movement during their high-intensity workouts. Supporting each stride is a full length Ignite foam midsole which provides responsive cushioning and high rebound, while the full length flex groove enables fast and dynamic multi-directional movement. Additional heel thickness support side to side movements. IGNITE XT is grounded in energy return and is designed to give back the energy put into each training session.

Autumn/Winter '15 Surf Collection by Vans

Vans rolls out its unique Surf footwear collection features trendy and cool prints with various new outsoles designed for an easy fit that would truly make a classic appearance. The collection comes with a new single-wrap, light weight, waffle-bottom outsole that makes the shoe light, durable and comfortable. The products are made entirely with recycled materials such as biodegradable water-based glues and inks, and 100 percent hemp textile.



Wrangler Originals by Wrangler

Wrangler presents its stylish, classic range of denims called Wrangler Originals, a collection of multiple fits that showcase the craftsmanship and American heritage of the brand. The definition of a true classic, these denims are a unique combination of style and comfortable fits. Wrangler Original denims are available in three basic silhouettes- Slim, Regular and Comfort.



Formula 1 CR7 by TAG Heuer

TAG Heuer dares to go green for the TAG Heuer Formula 1 CR7 chronograph, a numbered limited edition in tribute to football legend Cristiano Ronaldo. The green flange, matching the hands and the indices, strikes a bold note against the black chequered dial, while the white TAG Heuer and CR7 logos add a necessary hint of brightness which catches the eye. The completely black bezel, coated with titanium carbide, bears the chronograph's tachymeter scale. The chronograph is accurate to a tenth of a second, with the indication displayed by a small counter at 6 o'clock. The small counter at 9 o'clock displays the chronograph minutes, and the counter at 3 o'clock is for the current seconds.



Spellbound by Calvin Klein

Calvin Klein's Spellbound brings together python embossed leather in rich mineral-inspired tones, with a bold silhouette for an impactful look. The timepiece is accented by a polished stainless steel case and PVD pink gold and black dial, and is finished with a minimal "Calvin Klein" logo at 12 o'clock. Water resistant upto 3 bar, the watch is also offered in nature, grey, black, blue or yellow python embossed leather.

Touch Zero One by Swatch

The new Swatch Touch Zero One combines design beach volley functions for players and fans, such as step counter, power hits and power claps, taking the already popular Swatch Touch one step further. Apart from the curved touch screen and built-in backlight, to fingertap and sideswipe access to six timing functions, the new Touch Zero One also allows access to multiple beach volley functions right on the Swatch, and even more information when connected to the free Touch Zero One App.



Tissot PRS 516 by Tissot

The Tissot PRS 516 pays close attention to detail to ensure a winning result and boasts a stylish new movement that as well as being highly performing, with its 60 hours of power reserve, has a rotor shaped like a steering wheel for an adrenaline-fuelled finish. It is also equipped with a new ceramic or carbon bezel which features a tachymeter and a domed anti-reflective sapphire glass. Fans will be delighted original details remain, with hands that pass underneath adding an authentic, vintage touch.

Dive Master 500 by Victorinox

To mark its 25th anniversary in the watch business, the brand is producing a special Dive Master in a limited edition of 500 with several exclusive new features: the 43mm case is in grade 2 titanium, sandblasted mat gray. The treatment also embellishes the titanium bracelet. The dial is in the same monochrome grey, which gives the chronograph a particularly strong graphic look. The quality of the design, however, is not the only standout element. As the name suggests, Dive Master 500 is a genuine diving instrument.



Frogman by Casio G-Shock

Casio's new Frogman model combines the best in G-Shock performance with the latest technological advances, including tough solar, moon phase graph, moon age indicator, tide graph, world time, 5 alarms, and more. The use of stainless steel instead of titanium provides greater design freedom, as is evident in the watch's polished metal parts and machined buttons. The back and bezel are made of diamond-like carbon that resists scratching and wear, while the new LSI delivers high-speed processing.



Guess Dare Limited Edition by Guess

Available as 50 ml Eau de Toilette, the Guess Dare Limited Edition has been launched as a new variant of its Guess Dare fragrance from 2014. The fragrance comes in a bottle of the same design but pink in color, and offers a new fragrance pyramid. The fresh and sensual fruity fragrance begins with a combination of juicy grapefruit, lychee and crisp apple, while the heart includes a light floral bouquet of lily of the valley, jasmine and pear blossom, laid on the base of cedar, vanilla extract and white musk.

Selima by Bvlgari

An oriental spicy eau de parfum of fiery red energy, Selima is endowed with the restorative powers of carnelian. Deriving its name from the Arabic word for "serene and calm," this fragrance is imbued with the fragrant ointments and perfumes of Arabia. At the centre of the perfume is an embrace of velvety candied dates and a profusion of spicy top notes. Expansive, bold, and brilliant, the heat of pimento essence amplifies the intensity of the Bulgarian rose essence.



Nautica Life Energy by Nautica

Nautica captures the essence of adventure with Nautica Life Energy, an invigorating new men's fragrance. A classic aromatic watery fragrance, Nautica Life Energy opens with the effect of a crisp, ocean breeze, owing to its featured note of sea splash mixed with sparkling bergamot and a touch of grapefruit. The scent continues to build with notes of fresh sage, lily of the valley and ivy leaves providing a fresh and watery characteristic to the heart of the fragrance. The dry-down leaves an invigorating lasting impression with notes of cedarwood, musk and vetiver.



For Him Bleu Noir by Narciso Rodriguez

Cool and sharp with great depth and individuality, For Him Bleu Noir is the new fragrance for men from Narciso Rodriguez. The fragrance redefines masculine sensuality with a scent that's clean and sharp, yet enigmatic and extremely seductive. For Him Bleu Noir captures the epitome of modern men with great depth, clarity and a unique spirit. The designer's signature musk remains as the magical heart of the fragrance and is heightened with spicy top notes of cardamom and nutmeg and seductive woody notes of blue Atlas cedar and black ebony wood.



Jeu d'Amour by Kenzo

Jeu d'Amour by Kenzo encapsulates the essence of femininity and is a concentrate of sensuality. Tea, mandarin and pomegranate set the mood, while tuberose and freesia sign an ultra-feminine floral heart over a sensual base of sandalwood and musk. Available in both 50 ml and 100ml, the seductive fragrance comes in a luxurious yet elegant bottle. Jeu d'Amour is the latest creation by designer Karim Rashid, and is a promise of love and temptation.

THE PLAYLIST

OUR FAVORITE SONGS, ALBUMS AND VIDEOS RIGHT NOW



1. Drake "Energy" video

Drizzy makes fun of his many imitators by CGI-grafting his face onto Miley Cyrus, Oprah, President Obama and more in this very funny (and slightly creepy) video for the catchiest song from *If You're Reading This It's Too Late*.



2. Foals "What Went Down"

Find a lighter and spark it up high — even if you're home alone, the U.K. rockers' driving new single hits like an arena anthem.

3. Black Letters "Phila"

Bengaluru rockers Black Letters go smooth and trippy with a vibraslap setting the chill tone for the first single "Phila" off their upcoming EP *Petrichor*. Between their experiments in electronica and dream pop, frontman Sharath Iyer pleads, "House me in the fading light."



4. Wilco "Cold Slope"

The art-rock kings of the Midwest pack 11 killer songs into 34 minutes on their new LP. This simmering groove is an instant winner.

5. U2 "October" YouTube

U2 hadn't played this early-Eighties fan favorite for 26 years before they broke it out at a recent New York show. With just Bono singing and the Edge on piano, it's a must-see moment.



6. Lana Del Rey "Honeymoon"

Planning a goth wedding this summer? Now you've got the perfect song, courtesy of Lana's latest wave of gorgeous gloom, from her upcoming third album.



7. Keith Richards "Trouble"

Spin this salty jam for the first time, and you just might think you've stumbled across a most excellent outtake from *Nellcôte* in the Seventies. Nope — it's a promising preview of Keith's upcoming solo album, *Crosseyed Heart*, due this fall.

GUEST LIST



Albert Hammond Jr.

We asked the Strokes guitarist — whose new solo LP, *Momentary Masters*, is out now — to tell us what he thinks of five songs.

CLASSIC

Eddie Cochran "Somethin' Else"

I'm hearing this song for the first time, and it sounds so modern. But I don't know if we walk that line of so-tough and so-pop anymore. Oh, the times, they keep changing.

The Rolling Stones "Can't You Hear Me Knocking"

This is one of my favorite songs. It feels thick with humidity and wonder. It's sexual and fun.

Neil Young "Sample And Hold"

I love Neil Young very much, but I didn't enjoy the verse on this one that much. Maybe you had to be there. I'm going to loop the chorus for my pleasure.

NEW

The Libertines "Gunga Din"

What a fun return! I'm intrigued. The guitar in the intro is cleverly simple.

Tame Impala "Cuz I'm A Man"

This took me a few listens, but it's got me excited. I can't put my finger on what it reminds me of, but, fuck, it's great.



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SEPTEMBER 2015

GIG CALENDAR

ZIRO FESTIVAL

One of the year's most awaited music fests, the 2015 edition of Ziro Festival of Music is back with a lineup that includes alt rockers The F16s, electronica artist Nicholson, and Tripura rapper BK. The four-day fest held in the Ziro Valley near Arunachal Pradesh, known for its picturesque setting, has seen some of the best Indian bands in the past, including Indus Creed, Shaa'ir n Func, The Ganesh Talkies, Whirling Kalapas, The Ska Vengers, The Vinyl Records and more.

September 24-27

ZIRO VALLEY, ARUNACHAL PRADESH



TAKING OFF
The F16s head to Ziro Festival this month

2STROKE TOUR

After touring five cities in June with alt-rockers Skrat and post-rock band Aswekeepsearching, the 2Stroke tour is taking off with its second edition that will witness The Ganesh Talkies and Last Remaining Light share the stage. The tour series has been expanded to eight cities this time to include Shillong, Kolkata, New Delhi and Hyderabad.

September 4,
JAMSTEADY, KOLKATA

September 5,
CLOUD 9, SHILLONG

September 6,
TERRA MAYAA,
GUWAHATI

September 9,
ANTISOCIAL, NEW DELHI

September 10,
HARD ROCK CAFE AND-
HERI, MUMBAI

September 11,
HIGH SPIRITS, PUNE

September 12,
THE HUMMING TREE,
BENGALURU

September 13,

HEART CUP COFFEE, HYDERABAD

RAGADUB

Delhi-based Rastafarian-themed venue Raasta hosts its third annual RagaDub gig series this month, featuring performances across three days by producer Gaurav Raina aka GRAIN featuring vocalist Monica Dogra [from electro pop duo Shaa'ir + Func], an opening set by singer-songwriter Sidd Coutto, EDM artist Dualist Inquiry, electronic music producer Frame/Frame and audio-visual act B.L.O.T.I., among others.

September 9-11,
RAASTA, HKV, DELHI

PARVAAZ

The Bengaluru experimental rock band, who are also in the process of filming their first documentary, will perform in Mumbai. Since the launch of their debut EP *Baran* in 2014, Parvaaz have been

steadily gathering a fan base with their unmistakable prog rock/psychedelic sound.

September 17,
BLUE FROG, MUMBAI

RAW POWER:

Hosted in Chennai, the third edition of Raw Power is roping in metal acts such as Indore-based thrash metallers Elemental and Bengaluru-based prog outfit Eccentric Pendulum, apart from local metal acts like Diabolus Arcanum and Vidyut.

September 12,
GREEN PARK HOTEL,
CHENNAI

INSURRECTION FEST

Bengaluru's Insurrection Fest is back with its fifth edition, and will feature bands like Mumbai-based Cosmic Infusion, Antakrit, and extreme black metallers Solar Deity. Insurrection is bringing together seven of the most extreme

metal acts and promises an evening of mayhem.

September 6,
INDIGO LIVE,
BENGALURU

FUZZCULTURE

Following the success of their debut album *NO.*, Delhi-based electronica duo FuzzCulture return to Mumbai this month. Comprising guitarist-vocalist Arsh Sharma [guitarist/vocalist for The Circus] and Srijan Mahajan [drummer for Parikrama, Half Step Down, And Cyanide], the electro-rock duo are known for their high-energy live sets.

September 2,
BLUE FROG, MUMBAI

SU REAL 'BROWN FOLKS' EP LAUNCH

The New Delhi-based music producer has already carved a name for himself with his debut EP *The Grind* (2013), followed by the full-length album

Trapistan in 2014. His second EP *Brown Folks* is sure to stir up a rave on the dance floor.

September 13,
HIGH SPIRITS, PUNE
September 19,
CLOUD 9, SHILLONG

DELHI SULTANATE

Reggae/drum 'n' bass artist Taru Dalmia, better known as Delhi Sultanate, will launch his debut EP *Bootleg India 2 Africa* in Bengaluru and Mumbai this month. Apart from fronting the Delhi-based ska/reggae band The Ska Vengers alongside Begum X, Dalmia is also a member of Delhi's dubstep/drum group, BASSFoundation. In the past, the rapper has released a number of singles as a part of his solo project.

September 18,
THE HUMMING TREE,
BENGALURU
September 19,
BONOB0, MUMBAI



RIDE YOUR CITY



STAY
CURIOUS

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HEARTBEATS OVER PARIS

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